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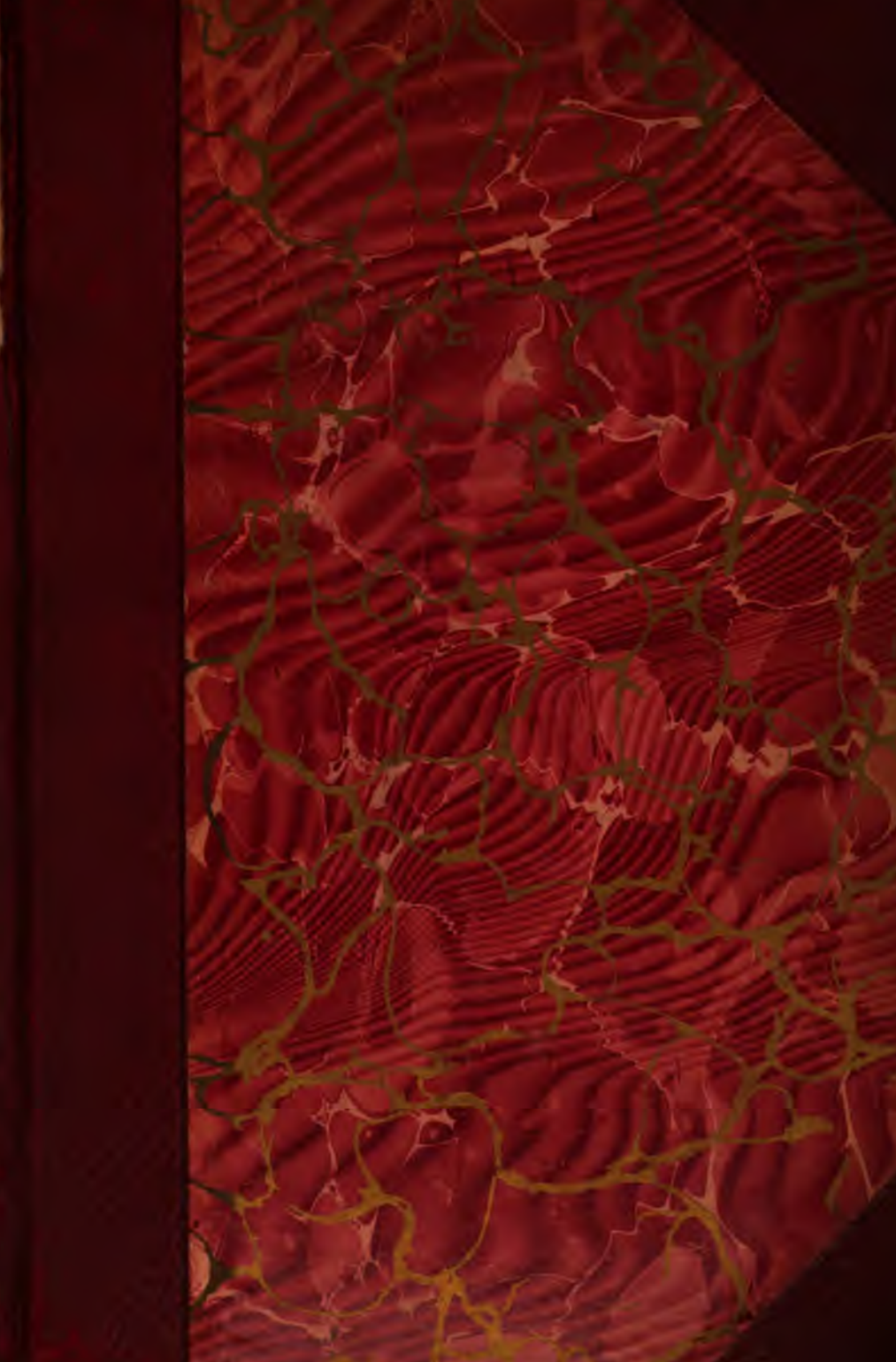
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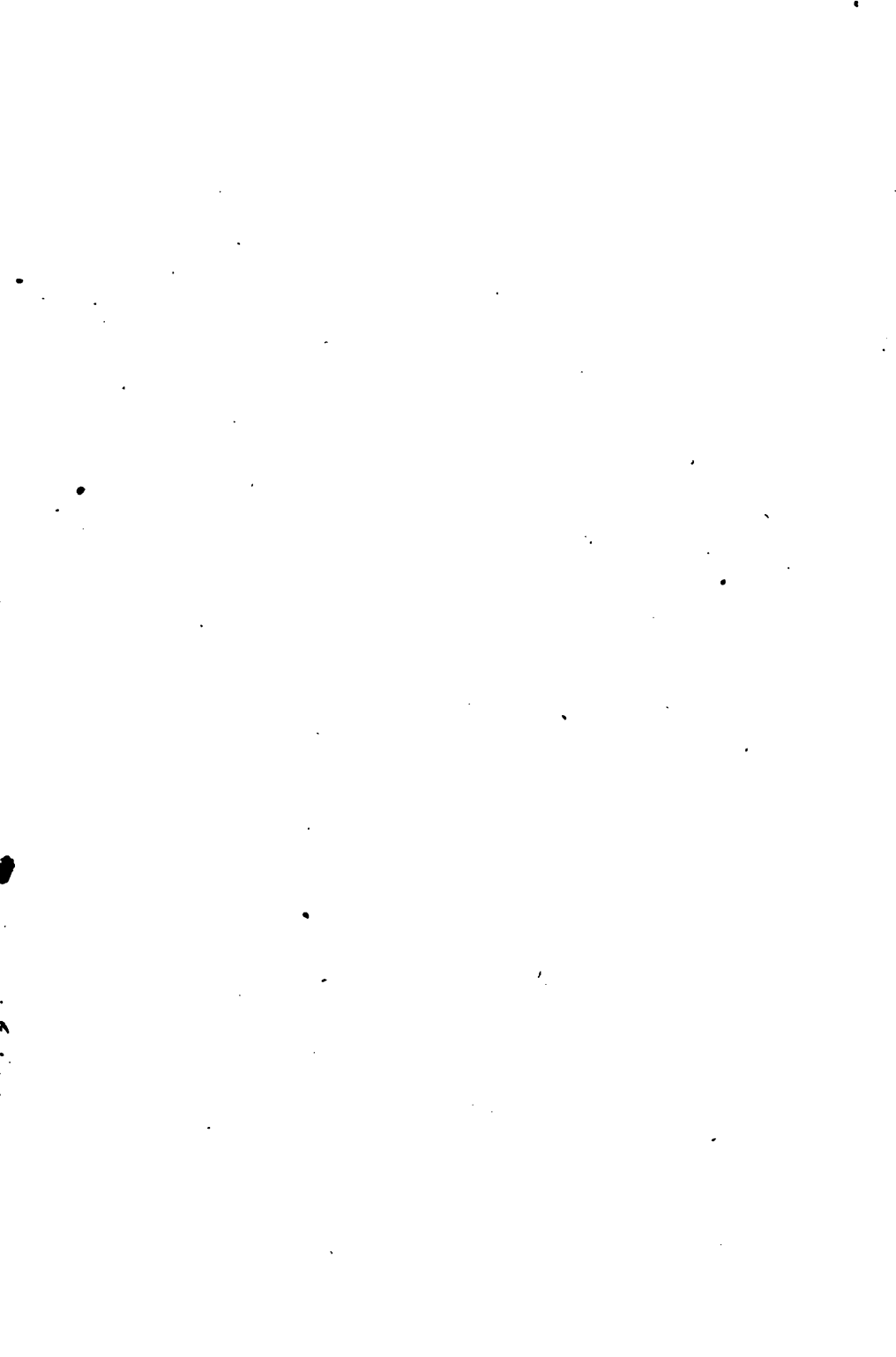
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THE EPIC OF MOSES

A POEM IN TWO PARTS

PART II. THE WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS

WILLIAM CLEAVER WILKINSON

AUTHOR OF "THE EPIC OF SAUL,"
"THE EPIC OF PAUL," ETC.

CHICAGO
A. J. SCOTT AND COMPANY

1905

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THE EPIC OF MOSES.

PART II: THE WANDERING IN THE
WILDERNESS.

THE Second Part of The Epic of Moses continues the narrative of the poem from the point at which the First Part suspended it, namely, the crossing of the Red Sea successfully achieved, and carries it forward to the end of the Wandering in the Wilderness and to the death and burial of Moses. The rebellion of Korah against Moses appears throughout in secret and silent preparation ; and the first open outbreak of it, with its suppression and punishment, furnishes the catastrophe of the narrative, which however includes a presentation in summary of Moses' farewell address.

BOOK I.
A SHADOWED TRIUMPH.

THERMUTHIS dies and is mourned by Israel ; Moses and Miriam each celebrating her virtues in elegy and eulogy. The host in pilgrimage are instigated by Korah, through his subordinate agents, to murmur against Moses and Aaron for lack of water and from fear of famine. The murmuring becomes menace of open mutiny, which Korah watches with secret pleasure, hoping to profit by it.

THE EPIC OF MOSES:
PART SECOND: THE WANDERING IN
THE WILDERNESS.

A SHADOWED TRIUMPH.

THE host of Israel all were well escaped,
Safe on the farther shore of the Red Sea.
He, on the hither shore, amazed, aghast,
The Egyptian monarch, with his retinue,
Saw from afar that deluge overwhelm his host.
A saddened pomp, wide contrast to the war
That late rolled proudly from the capital,
Thither returned; no spoil they with them brought—
Dismay instead, dismay upon dismay.

Meantime the ransomed host of Israel,
After their long adventure in the deep,
Reposed in peace upon the shore beyond,
Would high have hymned their triumph and delight

To see their proud pursuers overwhelmed,
Save that they grave occasion met to check
Rejoicing, and all pæan notes postpone.

Thermuthis had not so cast in her lot
With Israel, but that when she beheld
Such total overthrow remediless
Of Egypt's arméd might — the flower and choice
Of all the noble and the gallant youth
Surviving to her from that midnight dire
Of death to her first-born, swept out of sight
To an eternal burial by the sea! —
Thermuthis had not so become at heart
A Hebrew, but that she, beholding this
Before her very eyes, felt a sick pang
Of sorrow for her nation running chill
Along the courses of her loyal blood;
And when — not knowing that her son was safe,
Spectator of the last calamity,
But, save as such, partaker of it not —
She thought of him as hopelessly involved
Himself in the supreme catastrophe,
She could no longer bear the crushing weight
Of so much sorrow, added to her years.

No shadow of remorse, none of regret,
That she had chosen so, not even of doubt
That she, in choosing so, had chosen well,
Beclouded for one moment her clear faith ;
It was a sheer vicarious agony
For other than herself — who knows how prized
In heaven above, where all is truly prized ? —
Which, through her spirit, shook its tenement,
More than its aged frailty could endure.
Thermuthis, at the culminating height
Of Israel's redemption, ceased from breath ;
She was not, for the Lord had taken her.

The tidings of this death full quickly sped
Throughout the camp, to hush the general joy —
Hush, though extinguish not. Moreover, awe
Abode still on the host, to have beheld
Such overthrow, which had delivered them ;
And now to feel the margin scant whereby
They had themselves like overthrow escaped,
This by the hand of their Jehovah God.
Sobered and calmed thus, Israel held as yet
Their peace from sounding forth in song their joy,
And rested.

Meantime Moses, as was meet,
Appointed days of mourning for the dead —
In honor of her, rather than for grief
That one so ripe to die had met her death ;
He had sweet spices of right virtue brought,
Wherewith, applying his Egyptian art,
He caused the sacred clay to be embalmed
For present token of the form she wore,
Until, borne thence, along with Joseph's dust,
It should lie down in everlasting peace
Among the people she had made her own,
In the new seats they journeyed to possess.
On a fixed solemn and memorial day,
A choice from out the general multitude
Of Israel assembled, to give ear
While Moses celebrated in fit words,
Chosen and frugal, uttered from the heart,
The virtues, and the final glorious faith,
Of this Egyptian princess ; Miriam then
A song sang, to soft harping, in her praise.

“ Even from her virgin youth,” so Moses said,
“ Thermuthis was, beyond her nation — far
Beyond her royal lineage — of a sweet,

A gracious nature, formed for noble things.
Her pity toward the Hebrew babe she found,
That day, exposed upon the river brink,
Who wept up to the lovely face he saw
Hung over him — the tender wish to save
Written so plain in all those gentle lines
That even a babe could read and understand —
That pity was no shallow sentiment,
Come with the moment, with the moment gone,
But of the essence of the soul she was.

“ Remitting nothing of a mother’s care,
A mother she to Moses still remained
Through all his years of youth at Egypt’s court.
To her he owed it that his nurture made
Him, Hebrew though he was, and vassal-born,
Master of all reserved Egyptian lore.
When, now to man’s estate grown up, he saw
A Hebrew smitten wickedly, and smote
The smiter down, and fell thereby exposed
To be a victim of the king’s revenge,
It was Thermuthis warned him forth to flee.
Nor, during his long exile in the land
Of Midian, did Thermuthis fail to send

Signals to Moses of her loyal love,
And loyal hope that he might yet return
To Egypt, and round out a bright career.
And when at length those died who sought my life,
It was through good Thermuthis' messengers
Jehovah told me this, who bade me back,
To be his instrument in what ye know
Of wonderful redemption for you wrought;
So that if ye to me owe anything,
That same debt do ye also owe to her.
Most meet it is that ye should honor whom
God, in such use of her, has honored so.
I, Moses, thus ye know, have cause for more
Than a just share of public gratitude
Toward such a princess; as a son, I loved,
I love her, and I shall forever love.
Mourning her not — for that her age was ripe
For gathering to the garner of the Lord,
And that she thus has happily escaped
The toils of farther pilgrimage with us —
Mourning her therefore not, though loving her,
I hide her image in my heart of hearts.
Ye all, who knew her only from afar,
Must needs this intimate fine feeling miss,

To be, with distant reverence due, content.
But, I charge you, fail not therein of full
Measure; teach ye your children to admire
And love forever this Egyptian fame—
Remembering fondly, and recounting, how,
Against the ties of nature and of kin,
Against the stress of teaching and of wont,
Against the current of example wide,
Against the strong temptation to conform,
Against the allurements of her royal place,
This princess, all her life, though in the deep
Dark of idolatry surrounding her
She lived, as she could not but live, yet kept
A window in her spirit open ever
Toward God to let in heavenly light from him.
And the light grew, and gained upon the dark,
More and more shining toward the perfect day.
'And he was gathered to his people,' so
Our wont has been, our immemorial wont,
To say concerning such as hence have gone.
Of this beloved princess likewise deem,
'She has been gathered to her people'; those
Her people are, that holy fellowship,
Of all the good made up, and truly wise,

Of whatsoever clime, or race, or age
Foregone, that have preceded her to die.
Her spirit has returned to God who gave it,
But we entrust her fame to memory."

With grave assent of sympathy sincere,
And silent but unanimous applause,
All heard Thermuthis celebrated thus
By Moses ; and then Miriam in her turn
Took up her harp and touched its plaining chords,
While, with clear tones and high, of voice far-heard,
She to the greater congregation sang :

" Sleep well, Thermuthis ! Fair in youth wert thou,
But fairer with that glory of white hair,
Which whiter ever, like thy spirit, grew !

" Thanks be to God, who Miriam worthy held
To meet thee that bright summer morning, bright
Thyself as morning, on the river brink !

" Thanks be to God, that many and many a day
Thereafter, speaking with thee heart to heart,
Miriam was helped to help thee know our God.

“ Yea, thou art gathered to thy like in soul,
To Sarah, mother of thy chosen race,
To Rachel, who belovéd Joseph bore.

“ In thine embalméd clay go with us yet,
As, safe embalméd in our loyal love,
Thy memory shall go with us on our way.

“ Sorrow for Egypt’s sorrow was thy death,
O princess of the Egyptian royal blood,
And, loving thee, we less shall Egypt hate.

“ Dost thou hear Miriam hymning thus thy praise?
Where art thou in the world we may not see?
No answer; but we send thy spirit hail.

“ Hail and farewell, wherever now thou art!
Thither, where thou art gathered to thy like,
We in a little while shall follow thee!”

With such a cadence to her elegy,
Sinking a little toward the pathos she,
For all her high heart, could not master quite,
In prospect of her own end, now not far

Perhaps with her fast-multiplying years,
And face to face with the near mystery
Of death and that unknown which follows death,
Miriam ceased singing and withdrew from sight.
The people revered in their prophetess
Her sacred sad emotion, standing hushed
Some moments, and then quietly dispersed.
But joy returned, with triumph, in access
The stronger to their hearts, for the suspense
In which, for honor to Thermuthis, it had hung.
The reflux surge of feeling could but mount
To musical expression in a song
Of praise and glory to Jehovah God.
Led and inspired by Moses, thus they sang,
All the host sang, upon the Red Sea shore :

“ Unto Jehovah, with a joyful noise,
“ Unto Jehovah, I a song will sing,
“ For he it is hath triumphed gloriously.

“ He horse and rider both into the sea
“ Together has thrown down, and buried them
“ Beneath those waves which were as walls to us.

“ Jehovah, he my strength is and my song,
“ And my salvation he is now become ;
“ My God, my father’s God is he, my praise.

“ A man of war Jehovah is ; his name,
“ It is Jehovah ; he the chariots all
“ Of Pharaoh and his host sank in the sea.

“ The chosen captains of the Egyptian king,
“ Where are they ? In the Red Sea sunk ; the deeps
“ Hide them, into the depths like stones gone down.

“ Glorious in power, O thou Jehovah God,
“ Is thy right hand ; thy right hand dashes down
“ And into pieces breaks the enemy.

“ Thou, in the greatness of thine excellency,
“ Dost them that rise against thee overthrow ;
“ As stubble them thy flaming wrath consumes.

“ By blasts that from thy nostrils forth were blown,
“ The waters were heaped up, and stood as walls ;
“ And the deeps were in the sea’s heart congealed.

“ The enemy, he said : ‘ I will pursue,
“ Yea, I will overtake, I will divide
“ The spoil ; my lust will I upon them sate.’

“ With thy wind blow didst thou, and, lo, the sea
“ Covered them deep with its returning waves ;
“ They in the mighty waters sank like lead.

“ Who is there like to thee, Jehovah God ?
“ Among the gods, who is there like to thee ?
“ Sole, holy, reverend, wonder-working God ! ”

Then Miriam, with a timbrel in her hand,
Led forth the women — they with timbrels all —
Who danced a stately measure, while she sang
Responsive to her brother and the host :

“ Sing ye unto Jehovah, sing aloud
“ His praises ; he hath triumphed gloriously !

“ He horse and rider hath together both
“ With his prevailing billows overwhelmed ! ”

Thus they the wilderness made vocal there,
And the seashore resounded to their praise.

The pent-up passion of their joy given voice
Had somewhat eased the fulness of their hearts.

But there was pent-up passion in the host
Of other strain than triumph or delight,
A passion of envy and of jealousy
Toward Moses, which in sullen silence wrought —
As yet, but only its occasion bode.
Already, from the time when Moses grew
Steadily great and greater in the sight
Of Egypt, with his signs and miracles,
One man there was who, first among his peers,
The princes of the house of Israel —
By eminence he, above the rest who shared
His feeling — looked with evil eye askance
On the meek man's advance to fame and power.
The ulcer of his envy rankled deep
Before in Korah's bosom, but it now
Rankled still deeper and infixed worse pangs,
As he saw Moses more preëminent
Than ever in the admiring eyes of all,
Since Israel's great deliverance achieved.

The magnanimity of Moses — this,
And his intent devotion to his task —

Kept him long time unconscious that such leaven
Was spreading its ill influence through the host.
Had he guessed this, he still would not have guessed
That Korah, that a kinsman, was the source.
Korah indeed his counsels covered close
Or showed to others only one by one,
These chosen always from chief men of note,
Men with pretensions like his own to rule.
A master spirit Korah — in due time,
Out of his brain, there fostered slow till birth,
A great conspiracy will sudden spring,
Full-grown, and threatening Moses' overthrow.
Meanwhile already there are imminent
Occasions for that hostile spirit to work
Its mischief with the common multitude.
For, three days journeying in the wilderness
Of Shur, they no resource of water found.
They came at length to where there water was,
But bitter water ; whence the place they called
Marah — Marah, their name for bitterness ;
And bitterness it was that Israel all,
Set on by Korah through his underlings,
Felt and expressed toward Moses in their thirst.
“ What shall we drink ? ” they bitterly cried out.

Then Moses to Jehovah made appeal,
And by Jehovah he a tree was shown,
Which, flung into the water, changed it sweet.

At Marah, Moses gave to Israel
A lesson in obedience to God,
And told them: "If ye will indeed obey
Jehovah, he with you will covenant
To send upon thee no diseases such
As he upon the Egyptians sent; 'for I,
Jehovah saith, 'am he that healeth thee!'"

From Marah, where the water was made sweet
To Israel by that virtuous tree flung in,
They journeyed slowly on, until they came
To Elim, where twelve springs of water were,
And palm trees ten; and there their camp they pitched.

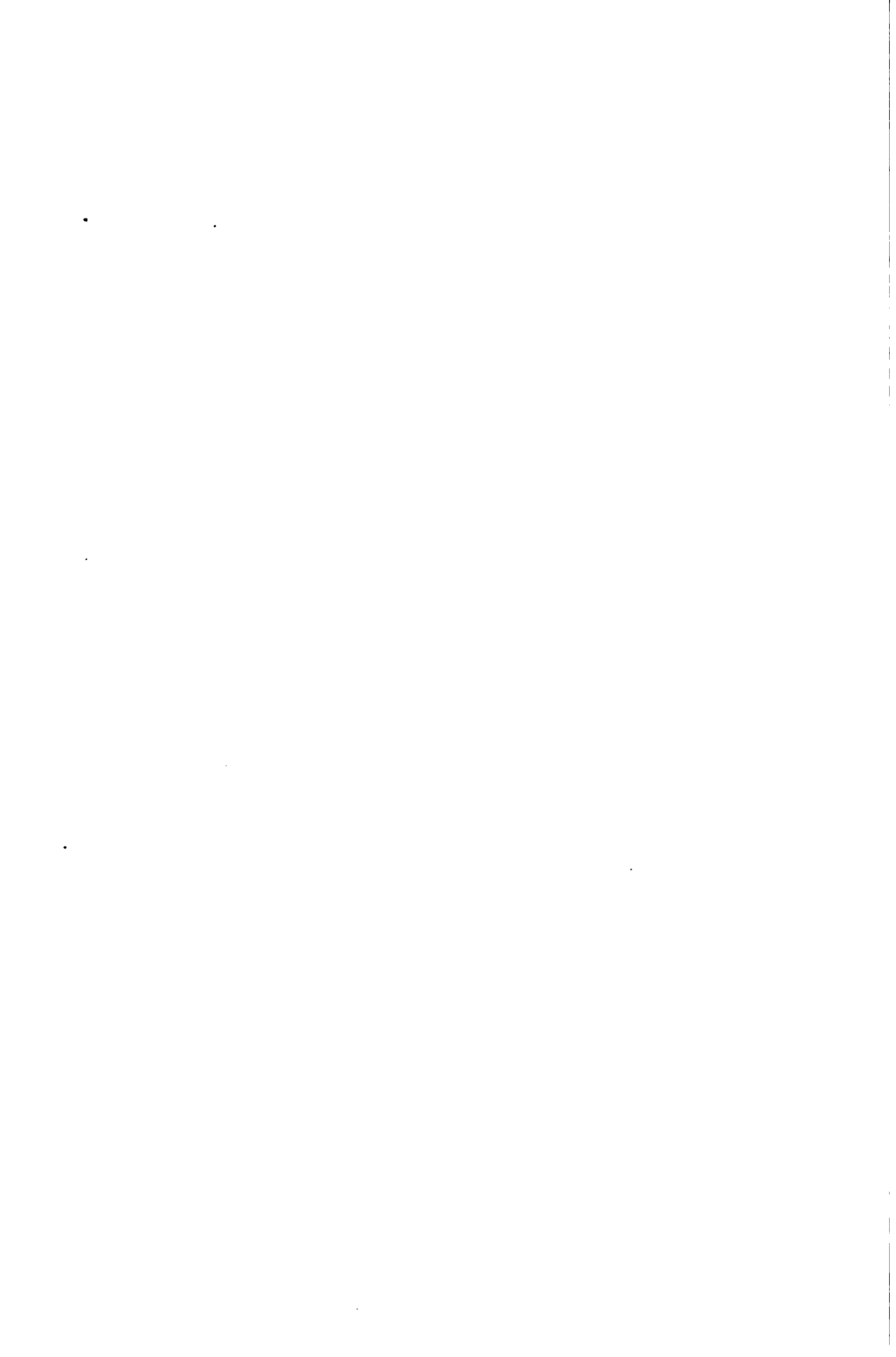
From Elim, with its palm-tree grove, and wells
Of water springing plenteous in the shade,
Again their journey they took up, and came,
That whole great host, into the Wilderness
Of Sin, wide waste which between Elim lay
And Sinai. Here that whole great host, in surge
Of clamor against Moses, round him beat,

Like the sea beating round an island shore.
But Aaron by his brother Moses stood,
And they together took the billows' shock.

By this time, Korah had a cry prepared
And furnished through his minions to the host,
Which they might take up against Moses — cry
Seditious and malevolent, designed
To make light of the service Moses wrought
For them in their deliverance from thrall,
Or even to turn it into injury.
“Would that we had, by our Jehovah's hand,
In Egypt died!” So that great multitude
Murmured — a rising murmur, like the sea's,
When the sea broods a tempest and its moan
Prophesies roar and wreck to follow — “Yea,
There sat we feeding by the fleshpots, there
Daily we filled ourselves, no stint, with bread.
But, behold, ye, Moses and Aaron, ye
Have brought us out into this wilderness,
Wherefore? To kill this mighty multitude
With hunger never to be satisfied!”
A murmur full of sinister portent,
Menace of multitudinous mutiny.

Korah looked on, dissembling his delight —
Korah, and those like-minded chiefs as well,
On, Dathan, and Abiram, sworn with him —
To see the tempest rage he had invoked.
Besides his primacy among his peers,
Easy ascendant Korah wielded wide
Over the host at large of Israel.
He might have succored and sustained the sway
Of Moses, had he chosen to appease
The passions of the people, not excite.
What he wished was to see the host become
Unmanageable quite in Moses' hands.
He hoped that Moses so would be reduced
To invoke his aid in bringing them to terms.
He would thereby be in a way to force
On Moses recognition of himself
As peer with him in Israel's leadership,
And in acceptance with Jehovah God.

With views and hopes and motives such as these,
The birth of envy and ambitious pride,
Those princes of the house of Israel,
Korah the head, contented watched the storm,
And waited what the issue was to be.



BOOK II.

MANNA.

PHARIMOH, the young Egyptian prince, enjoying for the time special access to Moses, watches the threatening popular tumult, in sympathy with his leader and in some apprehension on his behalf. Moses, by the simple ascendant of a personal majesty divinely enhanced for this occasion, overawes the multitude and promises them their fill of flesh, to come that evening, and of bread, to come next morning. These promises Pharimoh sees fulfilled, first, in flocks of quails sinking on the camping ground, and, next, in the descent of manna. Korah accounts for the coming of the quails, but the fall of manna staggers him. He however makes himself stout through sheer will in unbelief.

In connection with the miracle of the manna, the law of sabbath is proclaimed. This gives rise to question in Pharimoh's mind, and the result is a conversation between him and Moses, in which Moses gratifies himself by giving expression to many thoughts that had been teeming in his brain.

MANNA.

To Pharimoh, born, as he was, and bred,
To delicate nurture and to courtly ways
And manners, violent the contrast was
Of what he now encountered in the camp
Of Israel, all confusion and turmoil —
Involved inevitably in a vast
Heterogeneous massing such as that,
Of population suddenly astir
In movement and migration unprepared.
Moreover, wonted from his infancy
To all those recognitions, interfused
Ubiquitous throughout the Egyptians' whole
Civil and social and domestic life,
Of false gods many, and of misbeliefs
Religious that took hold on mind and heart
So deeply, and so firmly fixed the bent
And habit both of feeling and of thought,
Pharimoh — that support and stay withdrawn,
Fallacious, yea, but customary long,
And therefore seeming-necessary grown —

Was conscious of a strange vacuity
Within him and without him, which at first
His new faith did not altogether fill.
The universal immanence of God
Would by degrees, filling all things, fill too,
And full to overflowing fill, the void
Felt by him in himself, and in the world,
From that complete effacement of so much
Convention, till of late presumed to be
Unquestionable, like the universe.

But all this hidden trouble of the mind
Was in abeyance now to Pharimoh ;
The insurrectionary tumult wide
That he felt rising round him in the camp,
Created a diversion to his thought.
The prudent chieftain of the Hebrew host
Near his own person kept the princely youth ;
This, both because, loving him like a son,
He wished to hold him stayed in steadfastness,
And because Pharimoh's observant, sage,
Ever alert alacrity to serve
Whatever need arising might demand
Instinctive understanding of the need

And instant application of resource,
Made him, in loyal junior partnership
With Hebrew Joshua—recognized the chief
Of those who were the hand executive
Of Moses — in effect a minister
Whom ill that burdened leader could have spared.

From his place near the centre of command,
Pharimoh watched with sympathetic eye,
Not void of apprehension on behalf
Of Moses, that tumultuary tide
Setting with menace toward his chieftain's tent.
Two, active as ringleaders of the mob,
Or as fomenters of the discontent
(For they, though active, acted covertly),
Pharimoh, with amazement nigh dismay,
Discerned to be kinsmen of Moses, sons
Of Aaron, his two eldest-born, the same
That on the night of the passover went
Astray, seduced by sensual appetite.
These brothers, Nadab and Abihu, gross
In heart grown by defilement through the flesh,
Were by their grossness grown incapable
Of recognizing the unveiled divine.

Already then unconsciously they set
Their faces forward on the way perverse
Which was to lead them to that final goal
Where the despised divine, too long despised,
Would in avenging fire upon them fall!

Moses, beleaguered so within his tent,
Thence issued, obvious to the sight of all,
And clothed upon with a strange majesty.
Gazing with wonder, Pharimoh beheld
His reverend leader going forth alone
Amid the masses of the malcontents,
Who, awed by his meek calmness, and a power
Not his, descended on him from above,
Made way before him as he passed, recoiled
On either hand to give him ample room.
Those brothers, Nadab and Abihu, quailed
And cowered beneath their uncle's conscious eye
Flashing out reprobation, as in shafts
Of fulgurous light, with fatal aim at them;
They quailed and cowered, and sought to slink away.
Sole and ascendant thus, Moses retired
Without the camp, and to a place remote
Betook himself where there was pitched a tent

Of habitation for the Most High God.
The Tent of Meeting Moses called that tent,
For therein he was wont to meet with God.
The young Egyptian followed with his eye
His leader till he disappeared from view
Within the Tent of Meeting, when a Cloud
Descended from above it, pillar-like,
And took its sentry station at the door.

Pharimoh now looked round him whence he stood ;
He suddenly was conscious of a calm
Deeper, which, with that Cloud descending, fell
And overspread the murmuring multitude.
Round him he looked, and saw how every man
Of that seditious throng stood fixed in gaze
Upon the Tent of Meeting — still stood fixed,
As fixed they all had stood while thitherward
Moses had moved. Moreover, at the doors
Of all the tents throughout the wide-spread camp,
Like statues stood the tenant people, rapt
In wonder and in awe, resistlessly
Drawn to behold where Moses disappeared,
As, drawn resistlessly before to look,
They had stood, seeing Moses thither move.

Not one of all the host but to his feet
Rose, in involuntary homage paid ;
They stood and worshipped overcome with awe.

What Pharimoh thus saw — yet more, far more,
What he saw not, but imaged in his mind,
Or vainly sought to image in his mind,
The solemn mystery, and dread, which passed
Within that Tent, behind that Cloud august —
Wrought on his plastic soul effect profound.
Something of what he did not see, he guessed
When, the next morning, Moses, by the mouth
Of Aaron, to the Tent of Meeting called
Together all the host of Israel
There to behold the glory of the Lord.
They came, and, looking toward the wilderness,
Beheld indeed the glory of the Lord,
Not openly effulgent, but its light
Shrined in a cloud that let its lucence through —
As when the sun at sunrise veils his face,
Too bright to be in nakedness beheld,
In mist shot through and through with splendent beams.

That awful light, thus softened and subdued,

Aflame still in the eyes of all, a voice
To Moses issued thence, and said to him :
“ Tell thou this people that at eventide
They shall eat flesh, and that at break of day
They to the full shall sate their souls with bread.
So shall they know that I Jehovah am,
Their God, the living God of Israel.”

‘ Yea, yea,’ thought Pharimoh, ‘ if so be doubt,
After those signs of power in Egypt wrought,
Can live still in the breast of any man,
That he Jehovah is who speaks these words,
And that he is the God of Israel,
Then surely must such promised miracle,
Let but there fall such promised miracle
Indeed suddenly out of heaven, and food
Of flesh, and food of bread, in full supply,
Each punctual to its season, even and morn,
Be furnished in the barren wilderness
To all this fainting multitude of souls —
Then surely, surely, doubt concerning God,
His being, and his nature, and his name,
Concerning too his bond with Israel,
Such miracle must slay in every breast.’

So pondered Pharimoh, and yet, and yet —
' This miracle,' he wondered, ' will it fall? '

Korah was disappointed at the lull
Induced through Moses so upon the storm;
Lull only, he believed that it would prove.
A temporizing shift on Moses' part
He deemed it, that audacious promise given
Of flesh at even and in the morning bread.
He had not failed before to note the place
Of Pharimoh near Moses, and he now
Set on him eyes of covetous desire.
Could he but make that young Egyptian prince
A pervert to himself and to his cause;
Or, if not that, make him an instrument
Unwitting of his own deep purposes —
That were a stroke indeed from him of craft!
Thenceforward Korah throws round Pharimoh
Toils of a cunning that not often failed.
Meantime perforce he waited with the rest
To see the sequel of the day's events,
And what would come of Moses' promises.

But Moses, when pavilioned sole with God,

Behind that sentry Cloud, within the Tent
Of Meeting, had a further word received
For Israel. This Pharimoh now heard
Proclaimed abroad throughout the camping host.
Bread would be rained from heaven upon the ground
About the camp ; and daily should go forth
The people and the day's supply collect
Of food ; only that on the sixth day not
One day's supply, but two days', should be gleaned.
On the seventh day no gathering should there be ;
That was a sabbath holy to the Lord.

Such proclamation was to Pharimoh
Occasion, if not of misgiving, yet
Of curious and somewhat perplexing thought.
An undistinguished day, among the days
That followed one another endlessly,
To be selected and distinguished thus
From days before it and days after it,
Recurring between cycles still of seven —
This, or the reason of this, a riddle was,
Which Pharimoh tried vainly to resolve ;
It teased and tantalized his baffled mind,
Till he from Moses the solution sought.

Meanwhile that even he saw a cloud of quails
Come up from their low flight upon the camp
Of Israel, enough in multitude
To satisfy the hungry host with flesh ;
These gave themselves, as if with gladsome will,
To capture, at the hands of every man.
Pharimoh, filled with wonder at the sight,
Resolved within himself what he would do.
He, the next morning very early, rose
While yet the sky, unconscious of the sun,
Was unilluminated sapphire tint, or gray,
And forth into the open wilderness
Without the camp bent his slow musing steps ;
The marvel of that bread rained down from heaven
He wished to see. He saw it, but when seen
It somehow was less wonderful to see,
Than he beforehand had imagined it.
It scarce surpassed the marvel yearly wrought
Of bread rained down from heaven in sun and shower,
And from the bosom of the fertile earth
Upspringing, in the growth of seed to be
Rich harvest for the sustenance of life.
The supernatural looked to Pharimoh
So natural, that the marvel disappeared ;

But, cheating sight, his thought it haunted more.
Then to his thought the marvel of the world
Grew, and what common was before became
All of it marvel, all of it miracle,
And God broke on him in apocalypse,
And the creation was theophany
That morning to that young Egyptian soul.
Pharimoh never after was the same
As he had been before the universe,
From being to unbeholding eyes in him
A veil that made the Maker's glory dark,
Mirror became to show the Maker's face.

This is what Pharimoh that morning saw:
A dew lay overspread in pearly drops
Upon the sward; this the sun rising made
A wine of morning pure and beautiful,
Which with a twinkling iridescence gleamed
Responsive to the sun, and which he quaffed
With an ethereal thirst that not one drop
Left trembling anywhere on grass or spray.
Then, lo, the wilderness's face was white
As if with starry spangles of hoar frost;
But it was not hoar frost in spangles spread,

But something whereof no one knew the name
Or nature, strange to the experience
Of all the wonderers now come forth to see.
“What is it?” they of one another asked.
“This is that bread to be rained down from heaven,”
Said Moses, “which Jehovah promised you.”

So they, at Moses' bidding, every man,
Gathered of that descended bread from heaven ;
Few of them all, or peradventure none,
Considering how that sudden rain of bread
Miraculous, was more miraculous
Only by being somewhat suddener
Than what they had — with long-accustomed eyes
Waxed unbeholding through unvaried wont —
Seen, in the yearly seasonable yield
Of sustenance from the bosom of the earth
Brooded upon by the vivific heaven.

The coming of those flocks of quails at even
Was easy to account for, Korah thought.
Such things not seldom happen, probably ;
And either it was pure coincidence,
The present case timing with Moses' word,

Or his experience of the wilderness
Helped him see signs of it not visible
To others, unfamiliar with this waste.
The fall of manna staggered him ; but he
Braced himself strong with rally of sheer will,
And did not, for he would not, see the truth.
Blind resolutely, desperately blind,
He disbelieved in spite of evidence.

No vacant wonder only, void of use
Beyond supplying needed nutriment
To that else starving pilgrim multitude,
Was such a morning rain of bread from heaven.
Rich lessons of religion the wise God
Of Israel had infolded in his choice
Of way for filling that great host with food.
This, Pharimoh, in converse held apart
With Moses, as that leader leisure found
For the Egyptian youth's instruction, learned.

“ A wisdom manifold, O Pharimoh,
Is God's,” said Moses, when the youth inquired
Of him concerning that which now he saw
And heard, and with docility desired

The meaning of it all to understand.

Recipient and depositary made,
That he might be communicant to mankind,
Of revelations from the Most High God,
Moses was much preoccupied in thought
With things that had been in the far-off past,
And things that were to be in future time.
His vision swept a wide horizon round
Of past and future human history —
From the remote beginning of the world
Down to that moment of the time waxed full,
When God incarnate in the Christ should come,
And a new order of the ages start.
In outline only, and that outline dim,
These things he saw, and so depicted them —
In outline dim, yet clearly he discerned,
And clearly he declared, what truth would serve
As guide of life for men, and guide to life,
Would men but heed!

Thus Moses now, his mind
Surcharged with vital matter to impart,
Replying to the quest of Pharimoh,

Commenced remotely, with large sweep of view
That took in man's beginning in the world ;
It tasked his hearer's powers to follow him.
In truth, the teacher partly pleased himself
In saying what he said to Pharimoh.
Less what his pupil could receive and grasp,
Considering, than what he himself would say,
He impulse strong to utterance obeyed.
Moses was lonely amid multitude ;
There was not one in all that mighty host
Could share with him, on equal terms, his mind.
Yea, there was Aaron and there Miriam was ;
But, alas, these already drew aloof
Somewhat from full meet sympathy with him —
A taint in them of kindred jealousy,
Grafted with care by Korah from himself !
Yet Moses notwithstanding felt the need,
That common human need, to express himself ;
And nowhere was there, within reach to him,
A more inviting hospitality
For things whereof his mind and heart were full,
Than offered in the youthful Pharimoh,
With that bright wit of his, that open heart,
Those winning ways, that grace and graciousness,

Which made his youth of grateful touch to age ;
And Pharimoh perhaps would understand,
Of what he heard, enough to be of use.
So Moses in the ear of Pharimoh
Relieved with words the fulness of his mind —
Not idly, since at least to this result
Of good to Pharimoh, that he thereby
Was bound in love to Moses still more fast,
And so forearmed against temptation's hour.

Moses, his large discourse beginning, said :
“ Jehovah, with a condescending grace
Toward man never to be enough adored,
Created him in likeness to himself,
In such degree as, in the finite, may
Subsist a likeness to the infinite.
It was his gracious pleasure we should be
Capacious of communion with himself.
He gave us reason, love of knowing gave,
Us with imagination he endued,
Whereby we might the bounds of sense transcend,
And pass from seeming to reality.

“ For the most real things, O Pharimoh,

Are not the things about us that we see ;
But things unseen belonging to a sphere
That we but by imagination reach."

Pharimoh looked at Moses with surprise,
Hearing from him discourse of such a strain.
The rapt air of the speaker suited well —
Effect in it of wide detachment felt —
With the strange tenor of the words he spoke.
Pharimoh wondered : ' Do the hierarchy
Of the Egyptian priests, with their reserved
Doctrines occult and esoteric, teach
Such things to whom they will, keeping them hid
From all the common? And did Moses learn
As a disciple sitting at their feet,
From them his high and holy mysteries
About an unseen world beyond the seen —
Save as imagined, inaccessible? '
To Pharimoh, tranced listener held, it seemed
A thing incredible, but that he saw it,
To find in Moses, in whom hitherto
He had the man of action only seen,
Resourceful, strenuous, prompt, swift, resolute,
Now likewise such a different man, a man

Well-nigh the contradiction of himself,
One as for only contemplation formed —
A paradox of contrarities,
Action and speculation reconciled.

Such thought, half conscious, but unconscious half,
Meantime engaging Pharimoh, he heard,
And only in some measure understood
(Yet felt himself somehow emancipate,
And set in larger and more liberal space,
For hearing, though not understanding quite),
While Moses, on himself returning, said :
“ Save that I live a life in other realms
Than this which reels around me in unrest —
Unrest that ceases never from turmoil
And perturbation, seeming to no end —
Deemest thou, O Pharimoh, I could endure?
Nay, nay, my son. I must needs close my eyes
Full oft to present things, which else too hard
Would press upon them nigh, and drive me blind.
Through present things I look, and, far beyond,
Behold what is to be, what therefore is —
The future is indeed the only real —
Thus, and no otherwise, do I endure,

As seeing that which is invisible,
Invisible, but future, certain, real,
Full of the glory of the living God.
Oh, the sure recompense of rich reward
Laid up in store, against the chosen day,
For those who wholly trust Jehovah God,
And by imagination of him live!

“I deal but in dark sayings thus to thee,
And fold my meaning up in parable.
But thou shalt understand me more and more
Hereafter, as thou openest fair thy heart
To hear and to obey Jehovah God.
All was once lost by disobeying him —
But not lost irrecoverably, if we
Return to our allegiance and obey.
Watch and consider well, O Pharimoh,
The work and way of God already shown,
And further to be shown now presently
Before thine eyes, and thou wilt see it is
A lesson of obedience to himself
That he thereby in wisdom means to teach
This froward people, prone to disobey —
Yet only like the rest of mankind prone;

For all mankind together, since the fall
Of Adam from his primal innocence
(And Adam first by disobedience fell),
Have so infatuate been to disobey
God, that they even at length forgot him quite.
Ever and everywhere alights this curse
On such as dare deny to God his right,
His sacred sovereign right, to be obeyed,
That, from their thought being absent more and more,
At last he altogether disappears
From knowledge to them — self-withdrawn, as first
Perversely pushed aloof of human will —
Fit retribution of the dreadful sin
Of disobedience to God, to live
Thenceforth a blinded life forlorn of him,
Godless, with God around one everywhere !”

To have these high transcendencies of thought,
Elusive though they proved to his attempt
To grasp them, thus presented to his mind,
Was not without effect on Pharimoh,
To purify the fountains of his will,
To lift his aspirations and desires,
To fortify him against influence

For evil from without, and render him
Incapable of condescensions weak
Toward dalliance even with base compliances.
Well for him too that now his reverence
For Moses should be strengthened as it was
And deepened, by the glimpses that he gained,
Through such discourse, of the sublimity
Of pureness in his leader's character.
Resistance more instinctive thence would be
With him, should there insidious attempt
Be made to loose him from his confidence
In Moses, that sheet-anchor of his soul.

The horror of recoil from such a thought
As that of being Godless in the world,
Which Pharimoh beheld on Moses' face
Painted and which along his own nerves too
He felt expressed in Moses' muffled tone,
A reflex passion in himself begot.
This prepared him to listen with the more
Openness to impression from the word
Next spoken, as, with a solemnity
Grown deeper now, his teacher thus went on :
" But there awaited retribution worse.

God having made man to be worshipper,
The need in him to worship cried aloud —
Importunate cry, and inappeasable! —
For whom or what he might with worship serve.
And then, behold the shame, the tragedy!
Man, in the image of his Maker made,
With reason, with imagination high,
Endowed, with native indestructible
Instinct for right and truth and holiness —
So wearing the divine similitude —
Such being, self-debased to bow him down
To wood and stone in worship; nay, to seek,
To seek and, retribution last, to find,
Full satisfaction to the Godward spring
And buoyant aspiration of his soul,
In grovelling prostration of himself
To monstrous idols his own hand has made;
Or even in sensual or in cruel rites
Of abject homage paid before the shrines
Of deities, so styled, that demons are,
Rather than deities! So fallen is man.

“ From such a depth of fall, can he be raised?
Can God even, and will God, reach down a hand

To pluck his creature out of the abyss?
Yea, by new revelation of himself —
A revelation given in form of wrath
It must be, righteous chastisement of sin,
Yet revelation given in love despite
And mercy, though in form of wrath — God can,
God will, even yet, even yet, bend low to save.
That is the meaning, Pharimoh, of all
Those judgments dire which thou sawest visited
On Pharaoh and on Egypt and her gods.
Jehovah so would by destroying save —
Not Israel only, but through Israel all.
Yea, Israel also, people chosen of God,
Even Israel too, sore needed to be saved;
For they had fallen away from the true God,
All — save a remnant that held fast to him.”

This was high doctrine for the unwonted ear
Of Pharimoh to hear, and Moses paused,
Warned by a wise misgiving in his mind
That his young eager neophyte, though quick
To apprehend and of a docile spirit,
Could not with profit listen now to more.
So Moses paused, but soon this question heard:

“ O thou my teacher, gracious and benign,
As rich in wisdom, might I one thing ask?
I think I understand what thou hast said,
Interpreting Jehovah's ways august
And awful; but I much desire to know,
So it be fit that I should know, why God
Stoops from his height above our mortal state
And condescends to make demand of us
In such a matter, matter seeming small,
But, small or great, at least indifferent —
If I without irreverence may judge —
The matter of a day, select from days,
To be observed by us in abstinence
From our accustomed occupations all.
He has the right, oh, yea, God has the right
To claim whatso he will from us, but I —
Or am I wrong, and need I to be chidden
That such instinctive question stirs in me? —
I cannot feel, as I should wish to feel,
The wisdom, the necessity, of this.
It does, I own, pure arbitrary seem,
Or would, if I should dare to let it, seem.
Shall I submit myself blindly herein?
Or is it meet that I be made to see? ”

Moses, who had listened gravely, gravely said :
“ Desire of knowledge is a dangerous thing,
To but the spirit of obedience safe.
Desire of knowing, stronger than desire
Of holding fast their fealty to God,
Wrought our first parents' fall, nay, itself was
Their fall ; they had fallen already when they so
Desired. Make sure, my son, thou more desire
To obey God, than aught else in the world.
Then, but until then not, with safety thou
Mayst seek to know all that the curious mind
Well chastened by the wise obedient heart,
Can prompt thee to explore.

“ Thine be the risk,
Thine and not mine, if thou, thus warned by me,
Err in this thing. Consider well ; wilt thou,
Thus warned, still venture to pursue thy quest ?
Or wouldst thou rather stay it for a time,
And meanwhile strictly search thyself to see
Whether in pure humility thou seekest,
Or haply with some challenge of God's ways ? ”

Moses was reassured, when Pharimoh
Chose that the answer to his question wait.

BOOK III.

SABBATH.

PHARIMOH and Mahlah are formally betrothed. Moses, at Phari-moh's request, renewed after an interval following the former con-versation, explains to the young Egyptian prince the reason and uses of the sabbath. Korah meantime plans an attempt to make use of Pharimoh for the purposes of his intended rebellion. He employs two Hebrew brothers, twins, named Ehu and Ehi, to bring about an interview between himself and Pharimoh. These brothers meet Pharimoh in the wilderness near the camp, early the first sabbath morning, and, with much indirection, prepare the way to naming Korah to him as a great prince in Israel, with whom it would be well that he should have an interview, for counsel concerning a cer-tain idea suggested by them, namely, that he, Pharimoh, should lead back to Egypt those of the host who might wish to go back thither — a great number, as they represent. They do not yet name Korah.

SABBATH.

BEFORE again the young Egyptian won
Access to Moses to pursue his quest
Of quiet to the doubt that vexed his mind,
There intervened to him an incident,
To him and Mahlah intervened, full-fraught
For both of these with deepest moment; they,
After the simple manner of her race,
Solemnly joyous, duly were betrothed.
Such close relation now announced and known,
Their mutual meetings were thenceforward free
And frequent; and his Mahlah's quickening touch
Of heart to heart and mind to mind with him,
Had tonic power to brace him true and strong
In reverence and docility toward God.

Thus — and through much communion with himself,
And silent seeking after God in prayer —
Attenuated to a favorable mood,
Pharimoh found his opportunity
To say to Moses: "I am ready now,

O man of God, my teacher — and my friend,
If I may dare to claim thee such, whose grace
Toward me, so great, emboldens my approach —
I think that I am ready now to say
I more desire to render unto God
Obedience than to know in this or that
Why he requires obedience such or such.
Yet do I therewithal not less but more,
Far more than ever now, desire to know
His reasons why, assured that they are wise ;
His reasons for requiring I would know
That I his wisdom in them may admire.”

“ Hast thou,” said Moses, “ well considered this,
That thou mightst know God’s reasons and not know
His wisdom in them, far transcending thought ?
What if his reasons why, though wise indeed,
Be wise in manner such that thou wouldst fail
To feel them wise ? How wouldst thou then admire ?
The finite cannot judge the infinite.
The ways of God are ways past finding out,
Often, and often we must even forego
The pleasure of admiring — to adore !
Wilt thou adore where thou canst not admire ? ”

“ O Moses, how thy words,” said Pharimoh,
“ As with a lighted candle, search my soul
And find out what in me is innermost !
Yea, I perceive that did it abject seem
To me that I should thus bow down my mind
Before the infinite high God to be
Adorer of his wisdom where to be
Admirer is beyond my bounded reach —
That were a sin of folly and of pride,
Therefore of disobedience, toward God.
Yea, let me be content, even joyful be,
To render ever to Jehovah God
Obedience — my duty, as his due,
My duty and no less my privilege.
I had learned there is obedience of the mind
To be full oft in admiration paid,
Wherever one is equal to admire ;
But now I see that adoration pure
I owe sometimes where my mind fails of height
Sufficient to admire. Blesséd be God
Who made me such, I always may adore ! ”

Moses looked now on Pharimoh with eye
That eloquently spoke benignity

Not only, but complacence, with surprise.
“ God has great grace on thee bestowed, my son,”
He said, with a paternal tenderness
Which to the orphaned feeling of the youth
(Half-orphan long since by his mother’s death,
Worse, by his father’s tragic end; bereaved)
Was as a precious healing balm poured forth ;
“ In such an attitude as thine toward God,
Maintained through all temptation from without
(Through all far worse temptation from within !),
Freely mayst thou God’s mysteries explore
In safety ; with success, I do not say —
Unless a true success it counted be,
To find, if not in new light reason new
To admire God’s wisdom understood, at least
In darkness new occasion to adore !”

“ And may I then,” said Pharimoh, with wish
Yet keen, though purged of importunity,
Returning to his question of before,
“ May I know wherefore God a sabbath made,
A seventh day’s pause and abstinence from toil ?”
“ God is our Maker,” Moses framed reply ;
“ He is our Maker, and our Maker knows

What needs he lodged incorporate in our frame,
Whether our frame of body or of mind.
He in our bodily frame a need of rest
Lodged, beyond what our daily sleep supplies.
Even for our daily sleep his ordinance
Of night, through the withdrawal of the sun,
Provides its grateful quiet by a dark
Hostile to labor, friendly to repose,
Lest we neglect to take our rest in sleep.

“ But besides rest in sleep by night, we need
A day of rest at intervals of seven,
Wherein to pause at leisure and take breath
Amid the strain and stress of life's endeavor.
This for our bodies' sake ; but for the sake,
Yet more, of our minds' health and peace. So sleep,
That too, we need, for our minds' sake no less
Than for our bodies' sake, to keep us sane.
To both the body and the mind, is rest
Both food and medicine — the daily rest
Of sleep by night, and then, at intervals
Of days recurring, a whole day of rest,
That we may recollect ourselves and be
At peace from effort and from eagerness.”

Pharimoh's youth prevented him — his youth,
And health, and lusty blood, and hope, and joy
Of life — from deeply feeling the deep truth
Of all that he thus heard concerning rest.
And, ' If,' he wondered to himself, ' rest is
Indeed thus needful, when does Moses rest?
Who ever sees him easing from his back
The burden he as Israel's leader bears?'

But Moses now, with manner as if naught
Were what he had already said in poise
Against what he would further say, went on :
" Thou wilt remember, O my Pharimoh,
I told thee manifold the wisdom is
Of God ; I have not yet the half disclosed
Of the beneficent provision wise
He in his ordinance of a sabbath stored.
It is a revelation of himself ;
Not of himself as wishing well to men,
And wisely planning for their weal ; yea, that,
That also, but far more than that ; far more
And far more vital. For his sabbaths make,
Incessantly repeated week by week,
Incessant revelations of himself,

In essence, not alone in character.
Not simply as beneficently wise
They show him, but, more elemental yet,
And not less necessary to mankind,
As being, and as being God indeed;
That is, as living and as personal,
As having will — if rather we should not
Use language otherwise and say instead,
As being will.

“ Consider, Pharimoh,
How widely — nay, but universally! —
Mankind perversely proved themselves propense
Toward total last forgetfulness of God,
And thus toward fatal utter loss at length
Of knowledge that God is at all. God will
Now presently in sign which thou shalt see —
Sign granted with a condescending grace
Of wisdom and of power how wonderful! —
Prove — and then week by week renew the proof,
Month after month, year after year, by due
Recurrences of sabbaths, punctual,
Never once failing, never failing once
Of seal and sanction unmistakable

Upon them laid in sign from heaven — will prove
That that day chosen out of all the days
Is chosen indeed by God himself to be
A sabbath and to testify of him.

Bow down, O Pharimoh, prostrate thyself
Before high God; his wisdom and his grace
Adore! Many his glorious work will see
And seeing see not, blinded in their hearts.
But thou wilt see, behind the wonder shown —
Which only some will see and rest content —
Behind the wonder and bright shining through,
The glory of the wonder-working God!

“Two problems I propose to Pharimoh:
One, to find out a way conceivable
Whereby God could, if so he would, in grace
Reveal himself to men beyond their power
To miss the revelation — way more wise
In its simplicity, its manifold
Beneficent effect designed by God
Of proof to men not only that he is,
But that he is a Will, with power; a Will
That graciously concerns himself with men
And for their good requires obedience

From them — some way, my Pharimoh, to find,
Better, that might have been pursued by God,
Than to select a day, a common day,
Day undistinguished from its fellow days,
And yet with its returns dividing them
Into revolving cycles still of sevens,
And on such common day selected stamp
A solemn sacred character its own,
Making it sabbath holy to the Lord,
Inviolable, not to be profaned
Into resemblance to its fellow days
By labor whatsoever of the hands —
Thus to select and sanctify a day
And separate it from all days besides,
Solely by a decree commanding this
Issued from the eternal throne of God,
God only true, supreme, invisible —
What discipline conceivable more wise
To keep God in remembrance with mankind?"

Pharimoh listened to his teacher's words,
Without a thought of doubt or of demur
Excited in his mind; without indeed
So much as even a present conscious wish

To satisfy himself through question raised
Concerning what he heard, that so he might
The better understand it all in all.
The majesty and the authority
Of Moses for the moment overslaughed
His will and paralyzed his active powers :
His mind did naught but passively receive.

But Moses had forecasting thought for him,
And said : " Yea, but thou this wilt ask thyself :
How beyond peradventure shall men know
That God indeed has singled out a day,
And sabbath made it such as I describe ?
Behold, thy second problem, Pharimoh.
Task thou thy mind at leisure and conceive,
If so thou canst, some more effectual way
Whereby God could make sure to men that he
In very truth has sanctified a day
To be to them reminder of himself —
Some way more wise than that which he will take.
For — lo, the condescending grace of God ! —
He will his holy sabbath so mark out
By difference from all other days, that none
Willing to be believing can have doubt.

On other days, that bread from heaven will fall,
But on the sabbath not. Moreover, bread
Ingathered on the day before for that,
Shall sweet and eatable remain all night,
While bread ingathered on each other day
In overplus exceeding that day's need,
Shall perish, breeding worms and smelling foul.
So will God graciously his sabbath mark,
In condescension to men's unbelief;
And, one more token of the manifold
Wisdom of God herein displayed, he will
Complete and clinch the demonstration thus
Afforded that his will it is, no chance
Of nature, that produces these results,
By proclamation made before the fact
That such the fact will be. And, Pharimoh,
While God, as in a kind of overplus
Of condescension to men's unbelief,
Deigns to do this, he deigns to do it — how? —
Way wonderful for wisdom hidden deep,
Far, far too deep for human finding out!
Since me, ill worthy of the choice august,
He chooses for his minister herein,
Makes me his mouth and oracle; whereby —

Does this in part explain the mystery? —
The wayward host of Israel, to their good,
Will more be swayed to heed me and obey,
Attested so from God his minister.”

Almost as if in council with himself
Moses thus spoke, musing in uttered words;
Yet instinct to be teacher that was his
Prompted likewise, and an affectionate
Esteem of Pharimoh, which mingled ruth
With admiration for his generous mind.

Sad need there was that Moses so should be,
By miracle from God, by miracle
Indeed repeated upon miracle,
Attested and approved his minister
To work his will withal to Israel;
There was deep craft plotting against his rule.

Korah, although a man of cunning, yet
Was not a man of cunning low and vile;
He dealt in indirections, but not lies.
And always he liked better to use strength,
Sheer strength, than covert cunning, to gain ends.

There was in him enough of nobleness,
Of haughtiness, say rather than nobleness,
To make him feel that such as Pharimoh
Could better be approached upon the side
Of generosity than of self-love,
Of high ambition than of sordidness.
A man of dignity, of self-respect,
Of conscious and confessed authority,
Korah, should he the part of tempter play,
Was the one man for tempting Pharimoh.
How best his contact with the youth to gain,
That was the problem Korah first must solve.
He had his serviceable instruments
To work with, boasting each his several skill.

Among these were two brothers, twin in birth,
As likewise in their inner spirit twin,
Ehu and Ehi named; depraved in will,
They yet were quick in wit, and though they chose—
They, in their less way, like their master here—
To work through others, and warp toward their ends
By indirections in well-covered ways
To be themselves concealed, they did not lack,
Unmasked once and pushed to extremity,

The courage of their evil purposes.
They had for father that base Israelite
Whom Moses forty years before had found
Wronging a fellow bondman in the field,
And had rebuked with challenge, "Why dost thou
Thus smite thy fellow?" to be answered back
With taunt and menace: "Who made thee a prince
And a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me
As thou didst that Egyptian yesterday?"
The spirit in the father that thus spurned
Moses before, persisted still in him
And was from him descended to the sons.
So they twain, set on by their father, while
With all alacrity at Korah's beck,
Were heads of disaffection in the host
Stirring up mutiny against the rule
Of Moses—under mask of grave concern
And apprehension for the general good.
Pharimoh came to know these men, for they
Put themselves in the young Egyptian's way,
But they so well dissembled their real thought,
So well the guise of public virtue wore,
That, by his own sincerity misled,
He took them for quite other than in truth

They were, and gave them free access for speech
With him ; which they on their part were not slow
To use for tampering with his loyalty.

When the first sabbath dawned, after the gift
Of manna day by day began to fall,
Those brothers twain, Ehu and Ehi, forth
From out the camp into the wilderness
About it sallied, with the earliest light,
To gather, as their wont before had been,
Their daily manna for the day's supply.
Pharimoh earlier still than they was there,
He not to gather of that bread from heaven,
But with his own believing eyes instead
To see fulfilled the wonder of the word
From Moses that the wilderness that morn,
In contrast with the mornings gone before,
Would of its heavenly manna-dew lie bare.

“ Did ye perchance,” said Pharimoh to them,
“ Forget this was to be the sabbath morn,
That with your baskets thus you hither come
As if to gather manna here ? The wilderness,
Behold, is faithful to the prophecy

Of Moses that upon the sabbath day
No manna should be found strewn on the sward.
Is it not wonderful? The manna-fall
Wonderful was indeed at first to see,
Until it, day by day descending, grew
To seem almost as if a thing of course ;
And now scarcely less wonderful it seems
Withholden as it is than hitherto
Bestowed."

The youth spoke ardently and paused ;
He some response of wonder like his own
Expected, but was only met instead
With silence, which he did not understand,
Although he felt it was significant —
With silence for a space, and then with speech
That seemed a strange aversion from his point.
" Yea," Ehu said — he spokesman of the twain
Was ever — " yea," as if reluctantly
And with a kind of deprecation meant
To bar interpretation sinister,
" Thou hast well said, the manna comes and goes ;
Whether it goes and comes, that we shall see
To-morrow — for that one time — afterward,

Still doubtful. Most precarious staff of bread
To lean on for a multitude like ours,
Coming and going as it does! And even
Suppose it daily in supply, how long,
Deemest thou, before such fare monotonous
Will pall upon the appetite? How long,
Suppose it last not loathsome to the taste,
Before such insubstantial nutriment
Will cease to keep our strength recruited so
That we can well endure the weariness
Of endless camp and march in these waste wilds —
How different from Goshen whence we came!
Why came we thence? And whither do we go?
We know not, and who knows? Alas, this host,
This huge, this helpless host of souls astray
Amid the mazes of this wilderness!"

Such an aversion from his point of view,
So sudden and so sharp, struck Pharimoh
Stupid with wonder, with astonishment.
Not born, not bred, to feel responsible,
Or even so much as to consider whence
Came, or should come, his daily sustenance,
And now abruptly face to face with what

Seemed but a rational forecast and wise
Of future imminent for all that host,
For himself then, with Mahlah, no resource
Left save pure faith, small matter of surprise
If he was shocked and staggered into doubt.

‘Why, verily, yea,’ he said within himself,
‘What they say holds, we are dependent here
For very breath of life from day to day
On the returning fall from day to day
Of that light food. What if it fail? To-day
At least it fails. But Moses promised us’ —
And, confidence reviving with the thought,
He spoke aloud and to the brothers said:
“But ye know Moses promised us from God” —
“We know not Moses promised anything,
Whether from God or from himself,” they said,
“Save that one day he did indeed make bold
To tell us, ‘In the morning ye your fill
Shall eat of bread;’ beyond a fill of bread
For that one morning, naught was promised us.
True, without promise we have had it since,
The same, morning by morning, until now;
But now no bread is in the camp, save what

Remains to us from yesterday's supply.
There is no promise for to-morrow's need.
No harm, we trust, if with our baskets we
Go gleaning through this barren wilderness
To bring back thence what slender store we may
Of leaf, or root, or berry, edible,
There to be found, to stay our souls withal,
Should the to-morrow's fall of manna fail.
It is a sin to be improvident."

"Worse sin than not to trust?" said Pharimoh,
Who late the lesson had from Moses learned
Of trust as duty toward Jehovah God.
"Who is there we can trust?" the brothers said.
"Is there not he who hath delivered you?"
Said Pharimoh. "And who is he?" said they.
"Ye surely know the name," said Pharimoh,
"Of Israel's God; Jehovah, glorious name!"
"O yea," the brothers said, "the name we know
From Moses; any one that bears the name
We know not. As for our 'deliverance,'
Whereof thou speakest — a deliverance
Shall we count it to have been hither brought
To wander homeless in this wilderness

And at last perish of starvation here?
Would we were once more back in Goshen safe,
With plenty smiling round us in the fields,
And comfortable couches to lie down
To sleep at night upon, and overhead
The hospitable shelter of a roof!
Deliverance indeed it were, if now
Moses, or some one, could conduct us back —
Round the Red Sea rather than through it, once
Was times enough that dreadful ford to risk! —
Yea, back to Egypt and its servitude,
For us and for the generations yet
To follow us hereafter and their turn
To take, as we our good forefathers' turn
Took, of Egyptian bondage; wherein, pray,
Are we better than our forefathers were
That we should share a better lot than they? —
If indeed freedom be a better lot
Than bondage, which, with such a taste as this
Of freedom, we for our part dare to doubt —
What we would say is, *That* deliverance were,
Would some one lead us safely back again,
Yea, to our bondage, let it but be back
Again to Egypt — that deliverance were

Worthy the name; and he who led us back
Not only would deserve our gratitude —
Prize little worth indeed — but rich reward
Might confidently hope from Egypt's king.
If he who undertook such leadership
Egyptian were, and one of princely blood,
He would the more command the confidence
And following of a host accustomed all
Lifelong, nay, born as well as bred, to be
Obedient to Egyptian mastership.

“ Were such an one likewise a piteous man
Open to feel compassion in his heart
For hardship he himself has seen endured
By this poor helpless people led astray
In quest of freedom on wild pilgrimage —
Think of it thou, women and children, yea,
Even suckling babes upon the mother's breast,
Old, feeble, sickly, crippled, lame, and blind,
Footsore and weary, marching, in the camp
Huddled and crowding one another all,
Supplies none, often without water, rest
Forbidden by the noises of the night,
Sheep bleating, asses braying, lowing herds —

O sir, kind sir, consider, we entreat
Thee, and compassionate our case!"

Thus said —

All in continuous tenor of discourse
Asking not answer and admitting none,
Poured in a profuent stream that seemed to flow
Unbidden, unpremeditated, forth
From one mouth, Ehu's, but from two full hearts —
The brothers in abrupt withdrawal left
Pharimoh standing there where he had stood
Amazed to have his meditation so
Checked and diverted to a different course.
He could not but acknowledge to himself
That a changed point of view produced sometimes,
As surely in this case, a change of view
Quite unexpected, nay, surprising even,
Not to say staggering to the thoughtful mind.

To him so musing, back the brothers came
As suddenly as just now they had gone
From him, and added afterthought of words.
"O gracious sir," they said, "we, in our stress
And passion of affliction on behalf

Of our afflicted kindred in the camp,
Were overborne to miss from mention what
Is after all almost the chief distress
They suffer, as we with them equally,
And that is lack of goal ahead of us
To strive for, any certain goal, we mean,
Whereat arrived — if ever we indeed
Arrived, and perished not upon the way —
We might have hope of settling down at last
To rest in peace and plenty in new seats.
These endless aimless wanderings to and fro,
Hither and thither, sometimes doubling back
Upon our course, then, with no reason why,
Breaking our march and going into camp,
For how long no one knows, to idle there —
With infinite painstaking drudgery,
The fixing and unfixing of our tents,
The packing and unpacking every time —
But worse, far worse, than anything besides,
No hope of end awaiting us at last
In prosperous arrival anywhere —
Believe us, sir, this too-much-suffering host,
They will not, for they cannot, long abide
To be immersed in all this misery!”

Wherewith the brothers, waiting not reply,
Betook themselves into the wilderness,
As ranging there some chance of food to find;
While others, not a few, from out the camp
Did likewise, following the example set.

Ehu and Ehi trusted that the seed
Of thought seditious, thought ambitious, thus
Into the mind of Pharimoh let fall
Would quicken there and to rich harvest spring.

BOOK IV.
PHARIMOH TEMPTED.

PHARIMOH, conscious of some disturbance in his mind from the insinuations of Ehu and Ehi, retires to his tent and spends the day in brooding solitary thought. Late in the afternoon he betakes himself to Mahlah. Mahlah has, with her father's consent, become a kind of adoptive daughter to Miriam, and, living with her, comes to overhear things said between her and Aaron implying jealousy of Moses. Thus rendered herself uneasy in her mind, she is in a mood to match the mood of Pharimoh, and the two exchange disturbing thoughts. Mahlah suggests to Pharimoh that he seek an interview with Miriam. As a result of that interview, Pharimoh finds himself tempted to consider seriously the suggestion of Ehu and Ehi that he lead back to Egypt the disaffected portion of the host. He cannot gain access to Moses to consult him about the plan; and Aaron, consulted, says nothing to the purpose. Meantime the people tire of the manna, and murmur. Ehu and Ehi take advantage of this to meet Pharimoh again, and now they name Korah to him as one whom he should consult.

PHARIMOH TEMPTED.

IT was a rude revulsion in the breast
Of the ingenuous young Egyptian, wrought
That sabbath morning in the wilderness.
Pharimoh shared the tent of Joshua — who
In full-ripe manhood was unmarried still —
Tent next the tent of Moses in the camp.
Now Joshua was with Moses all that day
In council — age and wisdom taking tone
Of hope and courage from the sanguine touch
Of youth and vigor; while in turn too youth
And vigor from the elder contact won
Some meek communicated gentleness.
Such close preoccupation of the mind
To Moses, for that day and after long,
Precluded Pharimoh from the access
To stay and guidance in his master's talk,
Which youth in him and inexperience
Of danger from temptation to distrust
And to ambition speciously disguised,

Made needful for the safety of his faith
And of his perfect single-mindedness.

Returning to his solitary tent,
Secluded amid multitude he there
All the day long gave himself up to thought;
His thought engaged him in a perilous path.
'Those Hebrew brothers from their point of view
Had reason on their side,' he inly said.
'I never had before considered well
What a precarious case this is of ours.
Perhaps my love of Mahlah led me on
More blindly than I knew, or than was fit,
To share her lot whatever it might be,
Without the prudent care on her behalf
That had behooved in one who was, forsooth,
As husband, to become her providence
And wisely choose her ways of life for her.
I thought I trusted Moses all in all,
And through him trusted his Jehovah God.
Did I mistake my blindfold love of her
For what it really was not, trust in him?
Or did my blindfold love lead me to trust,
Where I had better done to use my wits?

Did too much awe of Moses overcome
In me my freedom and my power to judge —
In short, make me a vassal to his will,
His helpless victim to believe and think
Whatever he himself believed and thought ;
Or, more unmanly still, whatever he
Might haply wish me to believe and think ?

‘ They did not seem to have a selfish aim,
Those brothers, not a wholly selfish aim ;
They took thought for themselves, but, with themselves,
For others. They had naught amiss to say
Of Moses ; I was jealously alert
On his behalf to make a note of that.
I wish there had some little hint come out,
In their discourse at large so frank and free,
Of their unswerving loyalty to him.
They, as appeared, were too completely lost
In public care, for any other thought
Than what impends of peril to the host.
Clearly they do not altogether trust
The leadership of Moses, as resource
Sufficient for the safety of us all ;
But may they not be loyal to him yet,

Believing wholly in his upright will,
Though doubting somewhat of his power to save?'

Ah, Pharimoh, beware! That thought of thine,
That question whether loyalty entire
May not perhaps, in such a case as theirs,
Those brothers', well enough survive default
Of trust entire — it, under thin disguise,
Is really pondering, 'May not I, who plead
Thus on behalf of them, yea, may not I
Keep whole, untouched, unstained, inviolate,
My loyalty to Moses, and yet be
A little doubtful if he have not stretched
Beyond just measure his own confidence
In what he might with wisdom undertake
Toward leading such a mighty multitude,
So unprovided, through such wilderness,
To such uncertain and such distant seats?'

The livelong day until late afternoon,
That sabbath so propitiously begun
In mood so meet of musing piety,
Pharimoh stayed recluse within his tent
Revolving thoughts more froward than he knew.

When now the unclouded sun was well declined
Toward his recumbence in the aerial couch
He had spread golden for his night's repose
Beyond the mountains binding the Red Sea
On its west shore, Pharimoh took his heart,
Heavy with doubt and with misgiving born
Of the suggestion of those brothers twain,
To Mahlah and unbosomed all to her.

Now Mahlah, from the day Thermuthis died,
Had, with the good will of her father, gone
To be as child, or say as grandchild rather,
To Miriam, who no living daughter had.
This brought her nigh, in some degree to share,
As listener at least, the household talk
That would at times between the prophetess
And one or other of her brothers pass.
It soiled somewhat the pureness of her peace,
It dimmed somewhat the brightness of her cheer,
To hear, or peradventure overhear,
Not meaning it, and even against her will,
Exchanged between the aged prophetess
And Aaron sentiments that were not such
As she could fit to the ideal fair

Of pure and perfect holy character
Her reverent fancy had conceived for them.

Once she had happened thus to overhear
The venerated matron Miriam tell
Her brother Aaron how she could but deem
Her younger brother Moses quite too slack
And slow to own the debt he owed to her
For her part in his rescue from the death
Intended for him in his infancy.
Besides, he grudged her, so she thought, her due
Of honor for the glorious gift from God
That made her peer as prophet with himself;
And was not Aaron also chosen to be
Equalled with Moses as the mouth of God?
And then that Cushite woman, Zipporah,
Brought in for wife to him; as if, forsooth,
The tribes of Israel could not furnish forth
A worthier to be mother to his sons!

Mahlah took note that Aaron no response
Made to his sister's murmurs of complaint;
But none the less his silence and reserve
Was not, she felt, to be interpreted

As tacit check and blame to Miriam.
A sinister effect was on her wrought
By these discoveries of flaw in whom
She fondly had imagined perfectness ;
At least, whom she had placed above the plane
Of any such infirmity of soul
As could admit sordid regard of self
In thought of envy or of jealousy —
This toward a brother — and that brother he !
But — and a strange surmise intruded now —
But Moses, was he peradventure too
Less inaccessible than she had deemed
To human frailty and the sin of pride ?
Was Miriam warranted in what she said ?
Had Moses supercilious been in slight
Of brother's and of sister's equal claim
With himself to the high prerogative
Of revelation from Jehovah God ?
She felt her standing-ground of confidence,
Of childlike, for unconscious, confidence,
In Moses melting underneath her feet —
In Moses, and, with Moses, also all
The good, or those she had accounted good,
Fondly and foolishly, she sadly feared !

Alas for Mahlah, she was learning now,
From first experience of illusion lost
And broken idols, not to seek to draw
Her inspiration and her strength for life
From any fount of human perfectness
Vainly imagined flowing anywhere!

To Mahlah thus prepared to meet his mood
And partly match it, Pharimoh had come,
With that first sabbath in the wilderness
Lingering reluctant toward its golden close.
He came for comfort and for counsel where
Of comfort and of counsel there was need —
With only trouble and perplexity,
Instead, on either side, for each to share,
And in the sharing grown to double find.
“What means it,” Mahlah cried, “O Pharimoh,
That I should have such thoughts, new, strange, to me?
I find myself no longer trusting now
As I was ever wont before to do.
It is a sad loss, such a loss of faith;
I do not mean of faith in God, but faith
In fellow creatures; and my faith in God
Is not so lively and so comforting

As well I know it ought to be. It seems
As if that too might fail away from me.
Oh, help me, help me, to win back my faith!

“Let us be frank with one another,” said
Pharimoh soberly, “be wholly frank.
And tell me thou, my Mahlah, hast thou then
Lost also somewhat from thy faith in me?
That were calamity indeed — to me —
Calamity upon calamity!
Yet speak thou out thy heart, let me know all,
The truth, the truth, I would be hurt, if hurt,
With truth — and nothing heals at last like truth —
Hurt it, or heal, withhold thou not the truth.”
“Oh, Pharimoh,” cried Mahlah, scarce from daze
Rallying to recover use of speech,
“I never once had thought to ask myself,
‘Have I, or have I not, less faith in him,
In Pharimoh, beloved and betrothed.’
I only thought of thee as counsellor,
As comforter, for me in my distress.
I did not give my feeling any name —
My feeling toward my Pharimoh, I mean —
Even to myself; but now thou askest me

And I need name my feeling, it is trust,
I know, and nothing else than trust — save love.
And, God be thanked, my trust in thee at least,
O my beloved, my betrothed, my all,
Oh, yea, my joyful trust in thee is whole,
Untouched by doubt, untouchable by doubt” —
And Mahlah’s words melted upon her tongue,
As on the heart of Pharimoh her heart
She laid, and for one blissful moment they
Together lost the sense of their distress,
In the delicious mute oblivion lapt
Of love too deep for any speech but love.

But when that trance of such forgetfulness
Was passed a little, there dawned back to them,
Each one, remembrance of the haunting thought
They, each one, had of trouble in the breast.
“Thou hast never, I suppose,” said Pharimoh,
“More than had I until this very morn,
Taken upon thyself to ponder how
This mighty multitude in pilgrimage
Are to find food and drink upon their way,
Their long way, and uncertain, to an end
Uncertain — and such wilderness their way!”

By the diversion which thus Pharimoh
Had interposed from her own theme of talk,
Mahlah was gratefully relieved; he had not asked,
Pharimoh not as yet at least had asked,
To know her reason why for fainting faith,
And toward whom her new sentiment of doubt
Most tended. She considered deeply how,
Without disclosure even to Pharimoh
Of that which, not confided to her, she
Had, by sheer chance and quite without her will,
Late learned of Miriam's secret jealousy
Of Moses, haply too by Aaron shared—
Mahlah deep pondered how, not breaking faith
Toward Miriam or toward Aaron, she might yet
Put Pharimoh upon the way to ease
Her preying sense of sad uncertainty
Concerning Moses, whether he indeed,
As Miriam thought, was overweening proud
And selfish to deny his sister's claim,
And Aaron's, to equality with him.
So now she made response to Pharimoh's
Inquiry and confession as to thought
On her part and on his about supply
Of needful food and drink from day to day

For Israel in that barren wilderness :

“ Nay, I have ever been provided, I
Myself, and taken no more thought of how,
Than the birds do of how they shall be fed.
And as for others, I have seldom thought,
Or never, how my fellow creatures all
Are to find food and drink. A fault, I fear,
In me of unsuspected selfishness !

So of course never has one anxious thought
Entered my mind concerning this great host,
How they will find their future sustenance.
But, since thy question, and thy doubt implied,
I ask thee, Is not Moses one to trust ? ”

“ Thou askest ; thou affirmest not,” he said ;
“ Why not, I will not seek to know.” But she :
“ It rather was instead my wish to know
From thee thy feeling as to this. For me,
I had always trusted Moses, with no least
Shadow of doubt to cloud my perfect trust ” —
“ Until,” said he — “ but thy reserve is thine,
Let it for me abide inviolate.

Yet thy word ‘ had ’ chimes so with what in me
Was working, and to tell thee fair the truth,
Is working, that I deeper sink in doubt.

I had been brought, I need not tell thee how,
But I this very morn was strangely brought,
To have my first uneasy anxious care
And question whether Moses had not dared
Beyond just prudence in his leadership
To undertake the conduct of a host
So unprovided through such wilderness;
And now seems thou, albeit without this fear,
Yet hast thyself some doubt of him conceived —
Unless thou choose to tell me fairly, Nay.”

“Oh, Pharimoh! And would Thermuthis now
Were here to counsel and console!” so breathed
Mahlah her sigh of sad perplexity;
And added: “Thou hast been with Moses nigh,
Thou knowest him therefore as I know him not;
Yet haply Miriam knows him better still.
I dare not speak to her of this; but thou,
Thou art a man and darest what thou wilt.
Were it not well for thee to seek from her —
Oh, what? — I know not — any word that might
Lighten our way a little in this dark?
We must trust Moses all in all — or else —
Trust him, I mean, as being both wise and good —

Or else — else what? — I cannot think what else!”

With only so much intimation vague
For clue from Mahlah's hand to guide his steps,
Pharimoh sought his opportunity
Of speech with Miriam and groped his way
With her in words like these: “O Miriam,
Honored to be the sister of our chief” —
“Say thou not that!” with interruption prompt
Cried Miriam; “Say rather, prophetess
Of our Jehovah God, equalled with him.”

Miriam that chosen moment chanced to be
Prey of malign impulsion from access,
Recent and strong, of that strange jealousy
Which took possession of her noble mind,
Like a demoniac seizure mastering her
Sometimes to deem amiss of Moses — she
Unconsciously committing then herself
The very sin of overweening pride
And of ambition seeking human praise,
That she imputed to her brother meek —
Meekest of men proved, since, exalted most
And therefore, more than any fellow, faced

With the temptation to be arrogant
And build presumptuous pretensions higher
Than ever other builded of mankind,
He from his lonely overtopping height
Chose the alternative instead and cast
All vain imaginations farther down!

Thus for that moment, fated ill for him,
For Pharimoh, did she, the prophetess,
At bottom magnanimity itself,
Yield to a whim of paltry petulance.

Already, with no more than so much said
By Miriam, Pharimoh had come to know
That something other than seemed wholly meet
Between the sister and the brother lay.
Which was the one to blame? Or were they both?
And equally? Or chiefly which? A fault,
If fault it were, what seemed at least a fault,
Was here beyond all peradventure found.
One of these twain was proud, ambitious. Which?
Or were they both? If both, in what degree
Each one, not ascertainable perhaps.
But — was ambition, and was pride, a fault?

If Moses was ambitious, surely, No! —
Moses, that mirror of all nobleness!
Surely ambition might sometimes be good;
For instance, was not the ambition good
That prompted Moses to his leadership
Of people that so needed to be led?
And if — and if — there were a different need
Of leader now and if that different need
Were one that he, that Pharimoh, could serve
Better than could another, would it not
Be an ambition worthy of himself
To take the leadership so summoning him?
Obscurely an hereditary strain
Of aspiration to great things began
To waken in the young Egyptian's breast.
He was his father's son, and unawares
Pharimoh looked the way of Ramiphar.

Ramiphar's way was not a way of peace,
Peace whether for the mind or for the heart;
And yet it was a not ungenerous thought,
The perilous proud thought of high emprise
Which at that moment like a nimble wine
Set tingling all the blood of Pharimoh.

He had heard his father scornfully rehearse
How Moses once proposed to him that he,
Pharaoh's chief councillor, should move the king
To join his realm in a copartnery
With Israel for twinned witness to mankind
Of the true God; now might not Pharimoh
Become the instrument for bringing this
To pass indeed? A glorious exploit
Of leadership and statesmanship, if he
Could, of the disaffected, malcontent
Portion of Israel ready to break off
Allegiance to Moses and go back
(Were but one found to lead them safely back)
To Goshen and resume their abject life
Of bondage there — if he, of such as these,
Encumbrance mere, or worse, to Moses' host,
Could form as if a nation fit to be
Incorporate with the renovated state
Of Egypt, nay, but, through his governance,
Even capable of bringing by degrees
That renovated state, and reinforced,
From idol-worship to the one true God,
And of thus launching Egypt on a course,
Conjoined with Israel, of great history

Dedicate to Jehovah, wherein he,
Pharimoh, should be seen by Moses' side,
Younger, but scarce unequal otherwise,
Associate of that mighty leader's fame!

The thought intoxicated him with pride
Which he did not distinguish from pure joy
In prospect of illustrious things achieved.
Did Pharaoh still survive, his firstborn son,
Heir and expectant of his father's throne,
Was dead, and if the son of Ramiphar
Returned to Egypt leading back with him
No inconsiderable force detached
From the main host of Israel escaped —
A force himself had wielded and could wield
At will — why should it be beyond sane hope
That he might be accepted for the heir
Of Pharaoh, and his stricken native land
Raise up as from the dead, her savior hailed,
Nay, but her king — in deed if not in name!
The wings of his imagination spread
Bore him sheer off the ground into the air,
And with one waft of flight already he
Was to his aim delightfully arrived.

With questions and surmises thick, and then
With lightning flashes of foreshadowing such,
Possessed in mind and dazzled, Pharimoh,
After those first words from the prophetess,
Listened but absently and gave small heed
Further to Miriam's further words. 'I must,'
He said, in sobering counsel with himself,
'I must see Moses, not to move herein
Without the seal of his approval gained,
And then the profit of his wisdom too
For guidance in so great an enterprise.'

But Moses was too much preoccupied,
Far, far too deep immersed in public care,
To lend the youth the audience he sought.
The occasions of the pilgrimage gave rise,
Amid a mingled multitude so vast,
So childish, so unused to self-control,
To many petty strifes, or sometimes grave,
Embroiding now whole tribes or families,
And now but individuals of the host;
Such differences all to Moses came
For his composure, whether small or great.
Thus to the functions of his leadership

The functions of a judgeship were adjoined,
Which late and early overwhelmed his day.
Pharimoh felt that through such serried throng
And close investment of his leader, he
Had no just privilege of pressing in
To claim a present hearing for his plan —
Which not the less within his teeming mind
By sure degrees was greatening toward its birth.

In his enforced postponement of desired
Access to Moses, one of Miriam's words,
Scarce heeded by him when she uttered it,
Came back to Pharimoh in memory.
Mentioning Aaron she had made him peer
To Moses in vocation from the Lord
To be his prophet and his oracle.
'Why not to Aaron take recourse?' he thought,
And so to Aaron, as his brother's peer,
Pharimoh went and told him all his mind,
Openly and no confidence enjoined.
"A bold plan thine, to be considered well,"
He circumspectly said, and little more.
Pharimoh in effect was checked and chilled,
But as enlightened not so not dismayed,

And nowise from his purpose turned aside.

Meantime the manna duly week by week
Fell the six days and on the seventh day failed —
Solemn reminder ceaselessly renewed
To Israel, so slow-hearted to believe,
Of their Jehovah God's unsleeping care,
His faithfulness, his wisdom, and his power;
Ceaselessly, yea, and yet renewed in vain!
For soon the very ceaselessness itself
Of the recurring daily miracle
Of bread invisibly let fall from heaven,
Even with the weekly different miracle
Added of intermission of the fall,
To mark the sabbaths and to sanctify —
This revelation of himself by God
Became a veil to hide him from those eyes,
So blinded as they were by unbelief.
The supernatural familiar grown
Degenerated into natural,
Became the order of the universe.
So those slow hearts, those dull minds crass with sense,
Were face to face with God and knew him not —
As know him not how many now, although

Face to face with him in creation brought,
Creation each day shown more wonderful —
Eternal and continual miracle,
To whoso reads creation's book aright —
By each day's new discoveries therein
Of the Creator's wisdom and his power
Working the counsels of his will in ways
Which, the Lawgiver missing, men call laws!

Insensate Israel murmured against God,
Not knowing it, against Moses murmuring.
The manna palled upon their appetite;
They lusted for the savory foods they left
Behind them in their house of bondage late.
They thirsted too for water in the waste,
Complaining — this in muttering monotone,
Portentous as so multitudinous,
Most like a rumbling low increasing threat,
In thunder, of a brooded imminent storm —
That Moses had but led them forth to leave
Their corpses perished in the wilderness.

It was the occasion for those brethren twain,
Ehu and Ehi, by them partly made;

And Pharimoh, more open to their guile
By his own secret thoughts — alien from theirs,
In spirit, yea, by the whole breadth of heaven! —
While fondly fancying that with skill he might
Make them coöperant to his chosen end,
Really through them engaged himself in paths
Where snares awaited his unwary feet.
“What portion, think ye, of this pilgrim host,”
So Pharimoh one day of them inquired,
“Would welcome fitting conduct offered them
To take them back to Egypt?”

What reply

To render to this challenge of their guess,
Was problem to the brothers. If they said,
‘No portion of the host, but the whole host
Together as one man,’ that might appal
The youth, and make him shrink back from the thought
(Granted that, offered to their suffrages,
He should by Israel be acclaimed their head)
Of putting Moses so to open shame —
Balking the fond ambition of his chief
And leaving him stript bare of following.
That was one possible effect to fear

From couching their reply in terms too large.
A different possible effect was this :
So far from being self-confident and vain,
Pharimoh might instead even timorous prove,
And modest ; might be dashed by the idea
Of standing forth and facing Moses sole,
So formidable-seeming as he was
Doubtless to the impressionable youth,
In an audacious competition such
For arduous leadership with danger fraught.
To what pitch did the youth's ambition rise,
His aspiration, his self-confidence ?
If he true son was of his father, what
Might not be hoped from son of Ramiphar ?
But who the temper of the youth could know
Beforehand ? Would proposal of great things
Damp him or spur ? If part too safely small
Of Israel's host were promised him for his,
The meanness of the prize might but affront.

With these and more alternatives of doubt,
All in one instant darting through their minds,
Unable to determine this or that,
The brethren twain resolved to temporize

With tentative. They said to Pharimoh :

“ We cannot answer yet decisively
Thy question ; we have never polled the host.
Thou hast not yet thyself empowered us
To make a proffer of thy leadership.
That proffer made, there would be such response,
We doubt not, as would cheer thy heart to find
What confidence this host repose in thee ;
Or it might daunt thee even to feel the weight
Of so much general hope upon thee staked.
Which, then ? Shall we so make thy proffer known
As to invite large or but small response ?
Much would depend on how it is proposed.

“ We said we had not polled the host ; in truth,
Such move were quite beyond our mark ; we are
Plain common men, and no pretensions make.
We simply judge the people by ourselves
And by the talk buzzing about our ears
Which we must hear, or stuff our ears with wool.
If we might go so far without offense —
It is not for advice but honesty —
Whatever we might say, our naked word
Thou need’st not, and perhaps thou shouldst not, trust.

. But there are princes of the host whom we
Could name to thee if thou shouldst so desire —
Nay, but we dare not wait thy leave to speak,
We are too much pressed with sense of public need.
Since, for this moment, of thy princely grace,
Thou even to such as we dost lend thine ear,
We name thee names that thou mayst by them judge
Whether our words to thee are random words.
Thou wilt have heard of Korah, no mean name
Among the princes of the host, and On,
With Dathan and Abiram, great names all" —

The sound within the ears of Pharimoh
Of these commanding names had an effect
On him unmeant by those who uttered them ;
It woke him to a sudden sense of self
And of his debt to his own dignity.
' What do I listening thus to such as these ?
I will betake me straight to those they name,
And well it is they named them ; at some cost
Of hurt it may be to my self-respect,
I have at least thus learned where I may go
And find men nearer to my own degree
With whom to counsel as to what I plan —

The best recourse, as seems, that I can take,
Since speech with Moses is precluded so,
And Aaron proves to be so reticent,
Or empty of sage counsel, doubtful which.
The sympathy of Moses cannot fail,
Since the idea was his, and I shall lose
Only the profit of his wise advice
In choosing ways and means — sad loss, but then
These nobles should be sharers of his mind ;
They may in some sort stand in Moses' stead
To me ; or, if not that, at any rate
They can assure me whether I may count
On any adhesions, or on many count,
Won from their chief, to mix with saving salt
The residue made up of such as these
That I have talked with, and their following.'

With such self-recollection, Pharimoh
Was on the point to break at once away
From the two brothers ; but he checked himself —
Not to be wanting in due courtesy —
Minded to make his going less abrupt.
With this view he a parting word let fall,
Word lightly spoken, well-nigh with no aim

Save to provide himself smooth leave to go ;
But word which from those twain elicited
An answer fraught with pregnant consequence
To Pharimoh, whose mind was tinder then
Ready at the right touch to flash in flame.

BOOK V.
KORAH AND PHARIMOH.

PHARIMOH seeks and obtains an interview with Korah, who succeeds in acquiring at once an ascendant over the young man. Korah does the most of the talking, venting his jealousy of Moses in well-guarded ambiguous insinuations against him. He invites Pharimoh to meet an assembly of the nobles who will convene to discuss the existing situation. Korah then causes it to be understood among his confederates that, at the assembly proposed, Pharimoh shall hear nothing disloyal toward Moses, but only what will inflame his ambition to be captain for a return to Egypt of those who wish to go back thither. This assembly is postponed, because the march of the host is resumed. Israel reaches Rephidim and encounters there a famine of water. A mutiny, in which Ehu and Ehi, under instigation from Korah, are active, is threatened, with violence against Moses. Water is smitten from the rock. Pharimoh, through counsel from Mahlah, has his misgivings about his project, but persists in purpose despite.

KORAH AND PHARIMOH

Now Pharimoh, so to dismiss himself
Somewhat more smoothly from that pair, had said,
And lightly, not expectant of reply:
“Those very princes whom ye name to me,
Might they not well be deemed the fitting ones
To undertake that task of leadership?”
The brethren with such spirit and such speed
Made answer, that perforce, in act to go,
Pharimoh was arrested to give ear.
They said: “O sir, thou canst by no means guess
How potent is thy name with all the host;
We hear it daily passed from mouth to mouth,
And ever with a sigh of such desire
That thou wouldst have compassion on our state,
And use the matchless influence that is thine
By virtue of thy high Egyptian blood,
To mass all hearts together as one heart
Under thy leadership and lead us back!
We are not used to freedom, do not wish
Freedom, or rather do not wish exchange

Of mastership; we have so long been wont
To owe our duty to Egyptian lords,
We cannot kindly bend our necks to bear
A yoke by one of our own number forced
On us. We pray thee, we entreat thee, hear
With patience, nay, with condescension hear
The cry we two, as were we the whole host,
Now cry into thine ears. Thou art our choice,
Thou, and none other; but, refuse to hear,
And then indeed those we dared name to thee
May in thy stead take up our cause for us,
Forestalling thee, and, though with all right will
Attempting, and with much authority,
Yet, lacking thy supreme advantage, fail.
Irreparable disaster that, alike
For them, deserving well, and for us all!—
Which be it in thy choice, as in thy power
And in thy privilege it is, to fend!”

Pharimoh left the twain without reply,
But as he slowly moved his steps away,
Those words of theirs kept ringing in his ears,
And his quick thought was as a goad within
To sting him into action from resolve.

He went at once to Korah, and with youth's
Precipitate outspokenness began :

" I think that thou wilt trust me when I say
I am distressed, Egyptian though I am,
At so much discontentment as I see
Prevailing in the host of Israel.

I come to counsel with thee on the state,
The afflicted state, to which we are reduced —
' We,' let me say, for though Egyptian, I
Count myself one henceforth with Israel.

I have conceived a plan, or rather say,
Converted into plan a thought that once
Moses propounded to my father — he,
Alas, would none of it, my father — I,
' The son of Ramiphar, would, if I may,
Do somewhat to retrieve that sad default " —

" Thou comest from Moses to propound me this ? "
Asked Korah. " Nay, alas," said Pharimoh.

" Would that I might indeed have spoken with him
Concerning it ; then there had been, I trow,
No need to seek to thee." " Yea," Korah said,
In tone and manner to afford relief
To a suppressed and guarded irony
Which struggled toward expression in his breast,

Yet no least thin convey to Pharimoh
Of any lack of utmost loyalty
To Moses on the Israelite prince's part —
“Thou art firmly, art thou not, to Moses true?”
“Yea, surely,” Pharimoh replied, well pleased
To give the answer that he deemed was sought;
“Are we not all of us to Moses true?”
“Then wherefore didst thou not consult with him
As first recourse?” asked Korah; “were not that
A natural needed proof of loyalty?”
Eager to purge himself in Korah's eyes
Of any fault toward Moses, Pharimoh
Made haste to say: “I sought for this access
To Moses, but I found it not. Thou knowest
How he beleaguered is with throngs of those
Who will that he, no other, shall adjudge
Their causes and secure for them their rights.
Moses is overwhelmed with public care;
I could not gain his ear.” “Yea,” Korah said,
In the same tone and manner as before,
Which this time Pharimoh obscurely felt
Effect from, but interpreted as meant
Drily to check a little his own way
Of speaking as if he had need to note

For Korah that which Korah better knew
Already than could Pharimoh himself.
“Yea,” Korah added, and, repeating it,
Some emphasis ambiguous gave the word;
“Our Moses is a very busy man,
Too busy, takes too much upon himself” —
This said in manner such, none hearing it
Could have been sure what spirit was behind
The words so spoken, whether sympathy,
Or jealous accusation and complaint.
Pharimoh felt the ambiguity,
But, as became his gracious character,
The nobler sentiment attributed.

Now Korah not by title and degree
Only was prince in Israel, but prince
Likewise by princely traits of character.
With high will and the instinct of command
He blended haughty sense of personal worth.
A keen, inquisitive, intuitive
Intelligence was his, which exercised
Itself, by lifelong habit as by choice,
In great affairs and policies of state.
Too well he loved his consciousness of power.

Had he been childlike in obedience
Toward God, Korah lacked little to have been,
If not a Moses, one scarce less than he.
That childlikeness he lacked — a fatal lack!

The senior and superior air assumed
Purposely toward the proud Egyptian youth
By Korah, in his talk with him that day,
Was well supported in the Hebrew prince
By something of undoubted dignity
Which could not but be recognized in him,
As also by his venerable age —
Attributes both that, blending in a grave
Aspect of long-accustomed primacy,
Purged his assumption of offensiveness,
Yet irresistibly impression made
Tending to give the youth into his hands.

It was not a chance meeting which those twain
That sabbath morning had with Pharimoh.
Ehu and Ehi emissaries were
Of Korah, sent by him to sow a seed
Of such ambition in the young man's mind
As might incite to movement on his part

Unconsciously auxiliar to the aim
Seditious which those princes had conceived
Together under Korah's lead to break
The dominance of Moses with the host.
Korah as Aaron's kinsman easily learned
From Aaron how had prospered his device
Of instigation through those brethren twain,
Ehu and Ehi, with the Egyptian youth ;
He therefore needed not that Pharimoh
Should now himself unfold his cherished plan.
Korah's thought rather was to undermine
That trust in Moses as impeccable
Which probably the young man entertained,
And, dashing somewhat his self-confidence,
Establish an ascendant over him.
Thus therefore he went on to Pharimoh :
" Yea, Moses, then, denied himself to thee!
It well agrees with what I had observed,
I seem to have seen thee with him less of late.
Well, my young friend, it is a slight no doubt,
But do not take it overmuch to heart.
Thou art not alone herein ; we all in turn
Have felt the same thing disagreeably.
But I myself try not to notice it,

And meantime bear it meekly as I may.
It is a way, thou knowest, great people have,
To hold themselves aloof a little ; more
And more as they grow great — in their own eyes —
To make themselves more and more difficult
Of contact, of access even. Deem thou not
This wholly is of pride and haughtiness
On their part ; thou wouldst thereby do them wrong.
Still more perhaps it is a policy,
Policy, too, after its manner wise.
It tends to heighten men's esteem of them
As great, that is, it really makes them great.
Let but thy great one lose for once his name
For greatness, and he is no longer great.

“ In all these arts of greatness, Moses is
Confessedly the master of us all.
Thou must have marked the increasing frequency
Of Moses' disappearances from view ;
The secret of them in great part thou hast.
But on these mere withdrawals of himself
Not to depend too much for their effect
In magnifying him, he adds thereto
The acknowledged potency of mystery.

Hence those spectacular retreats of his
That draw the host to their tent-doors to gaze,
When he in solitary state betakes
Himself to that detached more spacious tent
Without the camp remote, which he will have
To be his Tent of Meeting — as if he,
He only, of the chosen people all,
Were worthy to come face to face with God!
A master stroke of mystery no doubt
It is; but mark me, my friend Pharimoh,
These arts and these pretensions may be pushed
Too far, they may become intolerable.
Wert thou but on thy former terms with him,
Couldst speak with him as man may speak with man,
There were no greater service thou couldst do
Moses than warn him against going too far
In these devices shrewd of leadership.
But, nay, for that attempt thou art too young;
He would resent it; counsel not, but act
Of some sort to relieve his too much care —
That is the service thou canst render him.

“Thou hast not told me what thy purpose is,
But time enough for that; thou wouldst perhaps

Learn something, for thy guidance, of the state,
The real state, of feeling in the host.
For this, young friend, thou hast well come to me.
Better than telling, I can show thee what
It is; thou canst even see it with thine eyes,
And with thine ears hear it, to make thee sure.
Two hundred and two score or so — no need
Of more exactness in such estimate —
A quarter of a thousand, let us say,
Of princes of the house of Israel,
The very choice and prime of all our chief,
Will meet me — when and where, I will advise
Thee duly — to consult the public weal.
Thou then and there canst certify thyself
In what ways, some perhaps unguessed by thee,
The state of Israel, thine own word to use,
Is sore ‘afflicted’ in this wilderness.
We will, with frankness and in confidence
Of thy good faith, bring thee to share so far
With us our counsels for the common weal.”

Not quite with frankness, though in confidence
Well merited of Pharimoh’s good faith,
Did Korah deal with the Egyptian youth.

For after Pharimoh withdrew from him,
Almost as if in kingly wise dismissed,
With such an air of loftiness let go
By Korah — dashed in spirit as result
Of that recourse to him — the Hebrew prince
Caused it to be made known to his compeers
That, when they next assembled, Pharimoh,
The young Egyptian prince and proselyte,
Would by his, Korah's, motion present be.
Nothing must then be said or done to show
Aught but all love sincere and loyalty
Toward Moses, while a lively sentiment
Of weariness and disgust of pilgrimage,
With fear of famine of both food and drink,
All mixed with homesick longing for return
To Egypt, should appear the general cry.
“ Now Pharimoh,” said Korah, “ is a youth
Of spirit, flush with zealous loyalty
To Moses, whom he knows not though he thinks
He knows, and whom he has a fancy wild
To serve by drawing off a goodly part,
Not all, not most, and yet a goodly part,
Of Israel, to go back under his lead
To Egypt, there to found a state in league

With Israel, he to be its head, and sway
The whole realm late by Pharaoh swayed, as king.
He thinks that in its desolated plight —
Bereft of whatsoever makes a realm,
Bereft perhaps of king even, nay, of heir
To king bereft — a well-descended man,
Like himself, son of Ramiphar the Great,
Might, bringing with him a good following
Of Hebrews, naturally the common sort,
But these well sprinkled with the pick and prime
Of such as we, their rulers — reinforced
Thus, he might hope to reinvigorate
Egypt, and giving her Jehovah God
For worship in the room of her false gods,
Might erect her into a state once more
Worthy at least to be an appanage
Of Moses' kingdom in his Promised Land.

“ The youth's ambition — loyal, understood,
Ever to Moses — knows no other bounds
Than those which that one loyalty prescribes.
Our aim must be to feed his fancy full
With wild hopes for his project wild, but so
As not to let him once suspect we know

What his dream is; it will be quite enough
If we inflame a secret confidence
On his part that, as soon as he shall move
In open demonstration, there will lack
Nothing in numbers or in quality
Of what he would desire to go with him.
It will suffice our purpose if we thus
Disturb the aspiring counsels of our chief,
And make him somewhat more amenable
To reason and equality with us,
His full peers in Jehovah's choice, as are
Indeed the assembly all of Israel.

“ I may myself have erred in saying too much
That might be understood by our young friend
As slant at Moses; but I thought it well
To let in softly to his callow mind,
As entering wedge, the thin edge if no more,
Of doubt of the infallibility,
The absolute infallibility,
Of Moses, and his quite impeccable
Superiority to mortal fault.
I trust I did not overdo herein;
But it behooves us now, of this be sure,

In our collective counsels not to raise
A least suspicion in the young man's mind
Of spirit in us not to Moses true."

Korah had named to Pharimoh a time
And place for the assembling of the chiefs
Confederate and conspired against the rule
Of Moses; but the morning of the day
On which at evening they should meet — retired
To distance under cover of the dark
(For quiet, Pharimoh was told, and not
To waken false surmises in the crowd) —
That very morning there appeared a sign
Which set the host of Israel astir
For movement out of camp and forward march.
A Cloud, the token of Jehovah there,
Ever above that tabernacle stood
Where Moses met Jehovah face to face
For converse with him — stately stood, and fixed,
Immovable, august, and pillar-like,
Biding by day while Israel should bide
At rest within their camp, and then removed,
When Israel should journey. Now that Cloud,
At point of earliest dawn, was seen by all

Ascending; it majestically moved,
A slow and silent solitary pomp,
Forward to where the van of Israel
Should muster for the onward march resumed —
March thenceforth to be guided on its course,
And guarded, through the trackless wilderness,
By that mute awful sentinel and sign.

The meeting promised Pharimoh was thus
Precluded; and thenceforward, day by day
For many days, the migratory host
Straggled and struggled through the wilderness
Behind their never-failing sign, that Cloud,
Which every morning from its resting-place
Above the tabernacle dedicate
To God without the general camp, arose —
A spectacle to unbeholding eyes
How many! — and majestically moved,
A slow and solemn pomp, to take its place
Before the van of the array, to be,
Advancing with accommodated speed,
To the great pilgrimage both guide and guard.
These days of journeying Pharimoh perforce
Postponed his looked-for meeting with the chiefs;

No less he, in the fostering heat of thought
And sanguine young desire, brooded the while
His purpose, studying means to make it fact.

Israel thus journeying painfully and slow
Arrived at length at Rephidim, and there
Pitched them their camp for welcomed chance of rest.
But they at Rephidim, to their dismay,
Exploring in all quarters round about,
Could find no water anywhere to slake
The thirst of men or cattle, no least spring
Upleaping, hidden, from the arid earth,
No little pool of water sheltered deep
In hospitable hollow of chance rock,
So hoarded safe from wasting after rain —
Far less a running stream that might supply
Life and refreshment for so huge a host
Nigh fainting to the death for lack of drink.
Explorers ever, single or in groups,
Returning to the camp, brought one report,
“ No water ! ”

The whole host took up the cry,
“ No water wherewithal to cool our tongues,

None wherewithal to save our souls alive
In this waste howling wilderness !” a cry,
One cry, of lamentation and despair,
Despair with execration and with threat
Commingled against Moses singled out
For accusation as the guilty cause
Of such distress, such danger, to the host.
No thought that host had of one upturned look
For help, whence yet so often help had come !
So little had those dull besotted souls,
Witnesses of so much theophany,
Admitted of the light that shone for them !
Deep in unwindowed walls of sense immured,
Amidst the blaze of noon about them spread,
They dwelt in dense impenetrable dark.

Ehu and Ehi were ubiquitous ;
It was once more their opportunity,
And Korah’s instigation stung them on.
They were as if two firebrands animate,
Intelligent, alert, malignant, keen,
To kindle conflagration everywhere ;
And indeed conflagration wrapped the host,
One flame, expanded to embrace at once

From wing to wing the whole encampment huge —
A flame of maddened, maddening mutiny
And menace against Moses, lurid leapt
In myriad tongues of burning to the sky.
Fierce voices, gestures fierce, with missile stones
Held in the hand uneasy to be hurled,
Invested the great leader — like a siege
When the enraged besiegers suddenly
Resolve to take the citadel by storm.

Then did the true meek majesty appear
Of Moses; not by pride sustained, he stood,
Childlike in that extremity of need.
“Why chide ye me?” he to the people said,
Pathetically deprecating blame;
But then with high austerity and just,
“Why tempt ye your Lord God?” Wherewith his
steps
He toward the Tent of Meeting bent. A power,
A guardian power august, from God, which held
The insurrectionary host in awe,
Attending clung, as if a panoply,
About him, while he slowly thither walked,
And charmed him safe from violence or harm.

Childlike he poured his plaint before the Lord,
There in that Tent of Meeting nigh to hear:
“ Behold thou how thy servant is bestead !
What shall I do unto this people ? Lo,
They well-nigh on the point to stone me stand ! ”
And God, from out his glory in the Tent
Filling it like an awful flame of fire,
Made answer : “ Go thou boldly forth before
The people, taking of the elders choice,
And likewise taking in thine hand the rod,
The selfsame rod wherewith the river late
Thou smotest — so provided, only so,
And so attended, forth before them go.
Behold, before thee where thou goest, I
Will stand upon the rock in Horeb ; then
Thou with thy rod shalt smite upon the rock,
In sight of those the elders, and forthwith
Water from out the smitten rock shall flow
A full flood that the people all may drink.”

In faith and in obedience, Moses so,
With his selected elders following him
In solemn slow procession, seen by all,
Went forth, and there the rock as bidden smote.

A fountain in the arid wilderness
Burst forth, a gush, a rush, of water, poured
In power and volume like a cataract,
Which made itself a channel as it rolled,
And streamed a river through the gladdened waste.
The people drank of it and quenched their thirst,
They and their cattle; then they plunged in it
And laved their weary limbs and washed away
The soilure of that dusty pilgrimage.
They huddled on the borders of the stream,
And feasted on it with their avid eyes;
They fed their ears with the delicious sound
Of water running wastefully away;
So plenteous, so abounding, the supply,
It banished every fear of future want.

All that abandonment to joy and use
Luxurious of the bounty of the Lord,
Bounty profuse miraculously given,
And thanks none to the Giver of it all!
The people and the cattle had their fill —
The cattle and the people gave no thanks.

Korah had been invited to be one

Among the chosen of the eldership
To go with Moses in that solemn train
And be a witness of the miracle
Of water smitten from the solid rock ;
But he had sullenly refrained to go,
Pleading infirmity for his excuse ;
While to his fellows in conspiracy
He said, in his disloyal loftiness :
“ The part of a retainer to the man
Is not for me ; I should not do it well —
To further swell his pride by following him ! ”

Some popular effect of influence more
For Moses followed from the miracle.
The same souls that before had looked to him
With blame in their extremity, nor once
Their eyes uplifted heavenward for help,
Now their eyes heavenward uplifted not,
At all the more, in trust for future help ;
They only for a little while the more
Built upon Moses for their confidence.
But this mood of the people, for the time
It lasted, gave those disaffected chiefs
Pause in their plans ; and Pharimoh meanwhile

Was still precluded from his chance to meet
With them; yet all the more their jealousy
Of Moses and their envy of his power
Festered within their breasts. But Pharimoh,
After the miracle in Rephidim,
Had some compunctious visitings of doubt
Whether it were not better done by him
To try what influence might indeed be his
Over the people, to appease their minds
And wean them from their foolish discontent —
This, rather than with elements at best
So crude, haply impracticable quite,
Attempt the task of building up a state
At once regenerate and regenerative.

This turn of thought in him was chiefly due
To counsel sage from Mahlah; for, despite
The hurry and confusion of the life
They lived from day to day in camp and march,
The twain had sometimes had their happy trysts
With one another, and to his betrothed
Pharimoh had at length revealed the thought
That more and more was master of his mind.
Mahlah gave earnest heed to all he said,

Earnest and sympathetic, while yet grave.
"O Pharimoh," she said, "whatever thou,
At last, at last, after wise counsel, weighed
Wisely, resolvest, therein count me part ;
With thee and in thee still to live and work,
Be mine, is mine, henceforward to the end ;
No other law of wifehood do I know.
The purpose, let me aspiration say
Rather, which may be purpose by and by —
It is a noble thought, worthy of thee.
Accomplished prosperously, it were a deed
Of glorious possibility for good
Beyond our dream even of the possible.
Naught whereof man is capable, too high
Is or too hard for thee, my Pharimoh —
Of that I feel well sure ; but as to this,
Whether it be within the will of God
That some, many perhaps, perhaps the most —
For wide appears the disaffection spread —
Of those delivered by his hand so late,
Should thither be led back whence, with such signs
Of dreadful judgment, he delivered them —
This, I confess, does hang in doubt to me.
If thou couldst bend instead the power thou hast

With these emancipated bondmen, new
To freedom, and so little knowing how
To use it well that they in wild caprice
Sometimes would fling it quite away, and turn
Again to bondage if they might — couldst thou
Thy power with them, in part possessed by thee
As recognized by them to be high-placed
In rank among their rulers late — couldst thou
Bend this thy power to make them tractable
To Moses as the minister of God,
Were it not better, Pharimoh, more safe ?”
But Pharimoh did not assent; he said
“ I feel that action rather is for me,
Far rather, than persuasive eloquence.
I thank thee for thy words, and I from them
Shall be with some misgivings visited;
But I need action, so to find repose.
A goad pricks me that will not let me rest.”

Respite to Pharimoh from his unrest,
With satisfaction, for a time at least,
Of his desire for action, was at hand.

BOOK VI.
AN ENEMY AND A GUEST.

THE Amalekites, an Arab tribe, attack the Israelites and are beaten back with overwhelming discomfiture. Pharimoh, appointed captain of a hundred, having taken gallant part in the battle, is made prisoner by the enemy, but is rescued by Joshua, commander in chief. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, coming from the land of Midian with his daughter, Moses' wife, and their two sons, pays Moses a visit in the camp. He gives certain sage counsels to Moses which the latter adopts. Pharimoh and Mahlah are married during the time of this visit; also Eri and Leah. Korah puts his unfriendly interpretations upon what has passed between Moses and Jethro. Jehovah announces to Moses that, after three days of preparation prescribed by him, he will descend on Mount Sinai and proclaim his law. Korah interprets the requirements thus made as expedients adopted by Moses to exalt himself.

AN ENEMY AND A GUEST.

WHILE Israel's host were yet at Rephidim
Resting in camp, there came an enemy
Against them, the collective force in arms
Of Amalek, a people apt for war
Who lived at large in those Arabian wilds,
Owning no fixed abodes, but all in tents
Dwelling, and, with their flocks and herds, their wives
And children, roaming still from place to place
As humor moved them, or as need compelled —
Their life thus a perpetual pilgrimage.
These now — perhaps in the forecasting thought
That Israel, invading their preserve
Of wilderness, were threatening to oppose
A dangerous competition with themselves
For the first choice and use of the few plots
Afforded of penurious pasturage —
Thus, or with whatsoever thought inspired,
Amalek now, to Israel resting there
In camp at Rephidim, came up in arms
With menace fierce of formidable war.

But Moses was not taken at unawares ;
Against surprise he had provided well.
Watch posted on the outskirts of the camp,
And scouts that scoured the region round about,
Brought timely warning of the danger nigh ;
And Moses, waiting not till it should come,
Wisely forestalling met it ere it came.
Thus spoke he to the man of his right hand :
“ Forth, Joshua, thou, and beat this battle back ;
Six hundred thousand men fit to bear arms
Our muster is ; of these take thou thy choice,
And scatter Amalek ere they reach the camp.
The camp must not so much as feel the blow ! ”

Joshua promptly to his tent repaired
And there found Pharimoh, who, while he saw
Joshua's armor-bearer girding on
His armor to his chief, spoke up and said :
“ Let me go with thee to this war ; I feel
A need of proving to myself that I,
I also, am a man ; moreover, I,
Not against Egypt — now, alas, forlorn ! —
But other foe, would bear some loyal part
In fending off a scath from Israel.”

So captain of a hundred Joshua made
Young Pharimoh, and took him to the war.

Pharimoh's hundred were the flower and choice
Of the young gallantry of Israel.
Under his leadership these all went forth
With joyful courage and with bounding hope ;
Thus went forth all — they would not all come back !

Now Moses had told Joshua : “ I will go
To-morrow to yon hilltop nigh and there
Stand holding in my hand the rod of God,
Token of our appeal to him for help,
While thou art fighting with this wanton foe.”

Pharimoh with his hundred saw a troop
Of Amalek's soldiery making headlong way,
As bent toward Moses, on the hill descried
And guessed to be the leader of the host
Of Israel, there standing, all to see
And to be seen of all, and with his rod
To sway their movements and inspirit them.
' Could he be captured,' Amalek thought, ' or slain !
To intercept that onset, hurl it back

Discomfited and shattered, Moses saved —
That was the instant thought of Pharimoh.
He shouted to his men to follow him,
And dashed with utmost impetus of speed
Athwart the course he saw the foe pursue.
They, on their aim intent, and forward strained
Their eyes toward Moses on the hill, safe prey
Already in their avid hopes, saw not
On their right side the swift and certain sweep
Of Pharimoh and his band now noiselessly
Shot like an arrow that the huntsman aims
To hit a quarry sighted on the wing.

The Amalekite attempt had reached the hill
Upon whose top stood Moses with his rod,
And now was taking, with scarce slackened pace,
The first steps of the difficult ascent,
When round a clump of clustered shrubbery,
Which masked them while they made this movement, lo,
Sudden as if upspringing from the ground,
Pharimoh and his band before them there
Wheeled into line confronting them, swords drawn,
And, though much spent with running, yet so keen
Charged them, that they, their weapons not in hand

For instant use, were stayed, were beaten back,
Were driven in confused retreat, pursued
Retreating with impetuous urgency
Until they reached — the remnant left of them
Not slain or fallen overcome with wound —
Until they reached the rally and support
Of the main force of their compatriots.

But now the fortune of the battle changed,
And it became the turn of Pharimoh
With his brave Hebrew hundred to retreat —
If but to them retreat were possible !
For those wild warriors of the wilderness,
Opening their ranks to welcome the pursued,
Swarmed round the gallant hundred, rather, swarmed
Into their number and divided them
From one another, outright slaying some,
And others wounding who escaped the stroke
Of present death — and captured Pharimoh.
He had his soft strength, and unexercised,
Exhausted in the struggle of the race
For interception of the Amalekites
And in the after struggle of pursuit;
Besides he had his sword lost — from his hand,

Weakened with weariness, by foeman struck ;
Disarmed, disabled thus, an easy spoil
He fell into the power of Amalek.
Grim prospect, that of a captivity
Endured among barbarians like these ! •

It was not such captivity to be ;
For Joshua from a distance had beheld
The dash of onset made by Pharimoh
In seasonable repulse of that assault
Attempted but defeated ere it fell,
And his pursuit of the retreating foe ;
And now he partly saw, and partly knew,
Not seeing, what the strait was into which
The gallant inexperienced youth himself
Had fallen and with him led his followers.
With instantaneous decision, he
A signal, by his soldiers understood,
To eye and ear alike, flashed far and wide,
And, himself rushing foremost in the van,
The whole host of his warriors whirlwind-like
All in one moment hurled themselves in mass
Upon the Amalekites together drawn
About their prey supposed, scattering them

As when heaped chaff is scattered by a storm.
So was that prisoner saved, and the day won.

If Pharimoh, in his precipitate plunge
Into the thick of battle and of risk,
Had, at the height and crisis of his need,
Toward Moses on the hilltop turned his eye,
He would have seen that chieftain, overworn
With the long weary strain, let droop the arm
That had the rod of God upheld to heaven —
Nigh even to sink exhausted on the ground.
But he was brought a stone whereon to sit,
While Aaron on his right and on his left
Hur his two arms upstayed that so the rod
Still pleaded its mute plea for help from heaven,
Till Joshua, with his whirlwind besom, swept
The battle-field and cleansed it of the foe.
That captain, knowing what the part would be
By Moses taken in the momentous day's
Decision, his high heart cheered and his arm
Nerved to the test of grapple with the foe,
By lightning glances shot at intervals,
Even in the midmost fury of the fight,
At that rod, sign of much in Moses' hands —

Affirming so his confidence in God.

Pharimoh, by the taste that he had had
Of action, found his appetite therefor
Whetted more keen rather than satisfied ;
The spice of danger that had seasoned it
But made his sanguine relish of it more.
But the fruition of his strenuous wish
In entrance on the high task of his hope,
Yea, and that promised meeting with the chiefs,
Which seemed to him desirable if not
Even necessary as preparative
Before overt committal of himself
To the great enterprise, were yet to be
Not once nor twice but many times postponed.

For now there intervened an interlude
To Moses of refreshment for that worn,
That heavy-laden spirit, haunt of pain,
Which to the fond imagination still
A lovely little household idyll makes,
An oasis of home there in the waste,
Bright glimpse of fair domestic foreground shown
Against a background of grave public care ;

An episode it was of grateful change
 From the monotony of camp and march,
 As of relief from battle, which a while
 Usurped the pleased attention of the host.

Jethro in Midian heard the clanging bruit
 Of Israel's clash with Amalek overthrown,
 And therewith the whole rumor of the deeds
 In Egypt of Jehovah on behalf
 Of Moses and the Hebrews ; and he now,
 After the pilgrims had left Rephidim
 Recovered from the shock of victory,
 Took Zipporah his daughter with her sons
 And came and brought them to his son-in-law,
 Where he was camping by the mount of God.
 Moses went out to meet his father-in-law
 And gave him filial welcome to the camp.
 Each of the other's welfare asked and learned,
 And Jethro told his son-in-law how wide
 Was noised abroad through all the region round
 The mighty news of what the Lord had done
 In Egypt, and to Egypt in the Sea ;
 And latest what on Amalek was wrought.
 Then Moses, as desired by Jethro, more

At large rehearsed to him the history
Until his ear was satiate with report,
When his tongue forth in words of wonder broke :
“ Now blesséd be Jehovah, whose right hand
Hath wrought these things for you ! Above all gods
Exalted is his name forevermore ! ”
For Jethro had from Moses, yet with him
In Midian, heard of Israel's God, and he
Was ready the great Name to hallow now,
And this he did with solemn sacrifice.
Then Moses had a simple banquet spread,
Simple but ample, in the wilderness,
And with his brother and the elders all
Of Israel, broke hospitable bread
For Jethro as their gladly honored guest.

A gracious spirit Jethro was, and wise.
He lingered for a season, Moses' guest,
Observing with considerate eye the while,
Sagacious, sympathetic, what the ways
Were, daily practiced by his son-in-law
In conduct of his arduous affairs ;
A counsel, fit to his experienced age
And his affectionate feeling, was the fruit.

“Moses, my son,” he said, “thou doest not well
To give thyself, from early morn to eve,
Each day, to judging causes and disputes.
So doing, thou wilt wear thyself away
Full soon; thou canst not such a strain endure;
This people too will suffer with thee. Lo,
Listen thou, while I give thee counsel good.
Reserve thyself for only causes grave,
Causes too grave for others to adjudge,
And lighter causes all turn over thou
To men whom thou shalt choose for hearing them,
Wise men and weighty, incorruptible
Pure men; these rulers make, of thousands some,
And some of hundreds, fifties, tens, and let
These judge the people in all lesser things,
While thou shalt matters of more grave concern,
More difficult, spread before God to judge.
Thus thou wilt save thyself alive and strong,
With leisure to consult this people’s weal
In ordinances for their government,
Thy rulers likewise being taught thereby
How to adjudge disputes with equity.
So do, my son, and thy God bless thee ever!”
And Moses, with that meekness which was his,

Being wise through meekness, so, as Jethro said,
Thenceforth his rulership and judgship shared
With chosen assessors who his burdens eased.

It was a choice and happy interval
Of peace and glad sense of security
From danger or disturbance to be feared —
Pledged in the awe that fell on every foe
In all the region round them, near or far,
From the discomfiture of Amalek —
That Israel now, at rest within their camp
Pitched underneath the mount of God, enjoyed.
The friendly spirit, as the fatherly,
Of Jethro made a genial atmosphere,
Ample, diffusive, climate broad and bland,
About him ambient, felt throughout the host.
This, with the incidents of festal cheer
Attendant on his guestship in the camp —
And Zipporah returning with his sons
To Moses, as if wedded wife again
And solace of his age and of his cares,
Himself at leisure more, released in part
From the strict taskwork of his leadership —
All made it seem a season opportune,

To Mahlah's father, for his daughter now
To become bride at length to her betrothed.
So Pharimoh and Mahlah with meet rites
Were married, under Jethro's kindly eyes,
Who, with the parents and the kindred all,
And Moses, and the matron Miriam
(And, in respectful silence of acclaim,
With one heart, the whole host who revered both)
Blessed them to live a long and happy life.
As if in pendant to the marriage rites
For Pharimoh and Mahlah, there were rites
Wherein were joined a lowlier pair that day;
Eri and Leah likewise now were wed.

When Jethro, venerable figure, went,
He drew all eyes to watch him going thence
In patriarchal state to his own land.
Moses attended him a little way,
With train for dignity and number fit,
In honor and affectionate regret
At taking last farewell of one beloved.
The land of Midian buried him from sight
Of future eyes thenceforward to the end;
He had become a moment visible,

Benignantly a moment for all time,
By virtue of relationship to one
Whom for his meek obedience God made great.

The spectacle — for spectacle it was
To most among that pilgrim multitude —
Of Jethro's visit to the Hebrew camp,
With also his departure picturesque,
Made a diversion for the general host,
Which, with the overthrow of Amalek,
At Rephidim, after the miracle
There shown of water smitten from the rock,
Conspired to make the people more content,
And more amenable to Moses' rule,
As rule at least commended by success
If sanctioned not by overruling power.
This temper in the common mind perceived,
Dissuaded those confederate malcontents
From further present effort to foment
That popular uneasiness which, they thought,
Urged to a point of culmination, might
Adroitly then be turned to good account
In bringing Moses to a proper mood
Of meekness as toward them and their just claim

Of something like equality with him.
That claim they did not by inaction waive,
But only in a wise abeyance hold,
Biding their time to press it sternly home.
That Moses should associate to himself
Assessors from his peers to share with him
The honors as the burdens of his place,
Might seem sufficient to suppress complaint
And take the ground of grievance quite away.
But Korah his interpretations had.

Now this prince honestly misunderstood
Moses; or at least honestly so far
As honesty is possible to one
Whose heart is not right in the sight of God.
That calmness which from meek obedience came
To Moses, Korah deemed repose of pride
In usurpation of authority.
“A shrewd old man, that Midianite,” he said
“He well enough perceived his son-in-law
Was making enemies where he should make friends;
Exciting passions he of course would call
By the ill names of envy, jealousy,
But which we know are sentiments in us

Of just resentment toward unseemly pride
And overblown presumption in the man
Intolerable the way in which he acts,
Assuming to do everything himself,
As if there were no wisdom in the camp
Except his own, no probity, no care
For equal judgment and for righteousness!

“ All this that shrewd old man, his father-in-law,
Had sense to see — as who indeed might not? —
And, under guise of tender-hearted wish
To save his son-in-law from overwork,
Advises him to parcel out his cares
To under rulers whom himself should choose;
As if, forsooth, this show of modesty,
Under advice and tardily put on,
Would pacify the insulted sense of worth
In men as capable as he himself,
And as deserving, of supreme command!
Are we not all, with him, the chosen of God,
And all a nation holy to his name?
Rulers of tens indeed, of hundreds, we,
Haply of thousands, while of millions he,
And therewith ruler of his rulers too!

“ But we must wait yet our occasion, safe
At length to come, when opportunely we,
And therefore with assured success, may press
Our claim in force upon him, and subdue
His towering pride to meet its fall invoked.”

Thus Korah, head of that conspiracy,
Caused to be spread abroad among his peers
(But privately, no called assembly had)
His plausible constructions, and his views
As to the proper prudence fitting them,
With cheers to patience and persistency.

But there was imminent now another scene
In that great drama of deliverance
For Israel and for human kind — a scene
The most august this planet ever saw,
Save only that long after to be shown
On Calvary too awful for the sun
To look on, and he hid his face in dark!
Upon the lonely mountain at whose base
The host of Israel had pitched their camp
(A two days' journey east from Rephidim),
Jehovah would himself in power descend,

Revealed and hidden both at once in cloud
And cloudy fire, and with tempestuous noise
Of voices and of thunderings, and the blast
Of trumpets such as never elsewhere
Were blown, or will be till that final day
When to awake, from land or sea, the dead
Of immemorial ages round the globe,
The resurrection trumpet shall be blown!

To a mercurial people, but prepared
By much experience of extremity
And of salvation thence through miracle,
To listen for a moment with good heed,
Moses a message from Jehovah brings —
Appeal it is, pathetic as benign :
“ O Israel, hearken ; I Jehovah am.
Ye what I did to the Egyptians saw.
But you I dealt with as the eagles deal
With the young eaglets of the parent nest ;
I bare you forth in safety as on wings
Outspread in gentle might to carry you,
And brought you hither to this mount of God,
Yea, as a father brought you to myself.
Behold, now, if ye will obedient be

And hearken to my voice indeed and keep
 My covenant, you my treasure I will hold,
 Peculiarly belonging unto me
 In difference from all peoples on the earth
 And far above them all ; the earth is mine ;
 And unto me ye shall a kingdom be
 Of priests, a nation set apart for mine,
 And holy to myself forevermore."

To words of grace and promise such as these
 From God, which Moses through the elders gave
 To the whole host in mass together brought,
 The people, in their momentary mood
 Compliant, answered with one voice : " Amen !
 All that Jehovah hath through Moses spoken,
 Lo, we will do. Amen ! " An easy oath
 And covenant with the lips taken — to be,
 In the behavior of the life, how kept !

To Moses then, Jehovah, face to face
 Speaking as friend to friend, said : " Lo, I come
 To thee in a thick cloud, and with such voice
 Speak that the people all may hear me speak
 With thee and may forever thee believe."

Now Moses had gone up into the mount
To speak with God and hear his voice. But, "Go,"
Jehovah said to Moses, "go thou down
Unto the people now and sanctify
Them this day and to-morrow ; bid them wash
The garments that they wear and make them clean,
That on the third day they may ready be ;
For on the third day, in the sight of all,
Jehovah will come down upon the mount
In Horeb, Sinai call it, mount of God."

The proclamation of these lustral rites —
Prelusive, as would seem, to some event
Sacred and solemn, what, so far not known —
And the observance following, wrought effect
Different on different minds. With Pharimoh
The effect was wonder nigh to worship. He
Toward Moses, with detachment more of late
From him, and distance, felt more reverent fear,
While steadfast love more too, and loyalty,
And confidence — to see the power he had
Equalling him to all emergency,
A power, he knew, not wholly of himself,
Yet ever his as ever at command

From One who failed him never in a need.
And when now presently by his behest
The mountain was fenced round with metes and bounds,
And proclamation made, "Behold, beware!
Go ye not up into the mount, draw nigh
Not, that ye even the border of it touch,
Touch only — lest ye die; for neither man
Nor beast shall live that touches it. Beware!" —
When this was done, the awe of Pharimoh
Was deepened, and his heart atremble set
To hearken and obey when God should speak.

But Korah was far otherwise than thus
Affected. He these preparations saw
And said within himself, and in due time
To his complotters said: "Let us confess,
This Moses is the master of us all.
The art of popular impression, who
Among us understands it as does he?
He more and more in mystery wraps himself,
To be admired because not understood.
What think ye mean these strange proceedings all,
These washings, and this hedging of the mount?
Mystery, mystery, and therewithal

Deeper concealment of himself from gaze,
Deeper to make the popular awe of him
And fasten stronger so his tyranny.
We princes of the host must not succumb
To be impressed as he would have us be,
And as the common for the moment are,
And as perhaps is well that they should be."

Korah thus counselled with himself, thus taught;
But not so those confederate princes all,
For On made difficulties and demurred.
"What if," On said, "as God hath Israel
Out of all peoples chosen to be his
People, peculiarly his own, so he
Out of all Israel hath chosen him,
Moses, to be his prophet and his voice
To men, beyond the claim and privilege
Of any other one among his peers?
Were it not well to wait and see the end
Of all these preparations, and the fruit?"

Thus On was minded, he alone of all.
Korah his answer had: "Said I not well
It in the end may turn out happily

For us and for our cause, that the success
Of Moses in imposing on the host
To think of him as really being great
To the degree he wishes all to think —
That his success herein should reach its height?
For here is On, a prince in Israel,
Ready, as seems, himself to acquiesce
In Moses' overweening claim to be
The master of us all. Let Moses, then,
Prosper, yea, prosper to his topmost wish,
In making his impression of himself
Upon the host supreme. He surely then
Will take on airs at length intolerable
To all of us together, even to On,
And we can make our movement in redress
Of our wrongs, and repression of his pride,
Unanimous and irresistible."

Korah's illusion was to prove his doom.

BOOK VII.

SINAI.

ON the third day at dawn, the mountain appears under a dense cloud, from which issue sounds of thundering, of trumpet blown, with tongues of flame, the mountain meantime quaking violently. In the midst of this, Jehovah summons Moses to himself in the mountain.

Korah again has his interpretations which he imparts to On, a fellow conspirator. On demurs, but is silenced by the ascendant of Korah. Pharimoh, on the other hand, is deeply impressed with awe, yet without being shaken in the purpose he has formed for himself. Jehovah delivers, in an audible voice, the Ten Commandments. The people are terror-stricken, and beg to hear Jehovah's message thenceforth through Moses only. Moses spends forty days and forty nights alone with Jehovah on the mount, and there receives from him a code of laws for Israel. Coming down from the summit of the mount, he joins Joshua at the point where that minister of his had been left, and they two, continuing the descent, hear ominous sounds proceeding from the camp below.

SINAI.

THE third day dawned and all the sky was blue,
And brilliant with a clearness most intense —
Save where on the stern brow of Sinai hung
A cloud, strange cloud, of deepest, densest dark ;
The brilliance of the clearness of the blue
In every other quarter of the heaven
Made seem deeper the darkness of that cloud.
Presently from the bosom of that cloud
Mutterings of thunder, tongues of lightning flame,
With peals as from a trumpet, peal on peal,
Exceeding loud, and ever louder blown !
The people in the camp beheld with fear ;
They hearkening were with panic pangs convulsed.

All in this terror, Moses from the camp
Led them, baptized with trembling, to meet God.
They saw the mountain smoke, the whole of it ;
Sinai, as if it were one furnace, rolled
Masses of smoke in volume to the skies ;
For on it came Jehovah down in fire.

They felt the mountain quake, the whole of it ;
From base to top it quaked, with dreadful sway
And oscillation to and fro, the while
The peelings of that trumpet louder grew.
Wind there was none ; and neither rain nor hail
Descended from that lightning-riven cloud.
The noise was not of tempest, nor the fire ;
It was the light, it was the sound, of God
Come down in majesty upon the mount.

While still the peelings of that trumpet blew
And when they were waxed louder to their height,
Moses spoke upward with his human voice,
And with a voice God answered him again.
Jehovah from the top of Sinai called
Moses aloud and bade him thither come.
And thither Moses went. But to him there
Jehovah said : " Go down and charge the host
Not to break through unto Jehovah here
To gaze, lest many perish doing so.
And the priests, they must sanctify themselves
Ere they draw nigh, else even upon the priests
Jehovah will break forth to punish them."
But Moses, to Jehovah as to man

Speaking, replied : " The people cannot come
Unto the mount; for thou didst bid us set
Limits about the mount not to be passed."

Once more Jehovah unto Moses said :

" Go, get thee down ; and, coming back again,
Bring thou thy brother with thee ; but the priests,
They must not, nor the people, hither break
Through to Jehovah, lest Jehovah break
Forth upon them." So Moses got him down
And told the people what Jehovah said.

Korah his own thoughts thought. He had perforce
Been with the present overwhelming tide
Of popular movement swept along to do,
In common with the rest, what Moses bade,
He in his soul revolting all the while.
' How Moses does continue to impose
Himself upon this host, and more and more !
Is there to be no end to this ? ' he thought ;
' No end, I judge, but such an overdoing
Of his presumptuous part, that at length all,
All of us princes of the host at least,
Shall swear together with one heart and voice,
And move together with one heart and hand,

To mend his manners grown insufferable.'

So much his musing Korah shared to On,
Whom he with reason felt to be unsure
In his adhesion to the plans on foot.
On more accessible had been to awe ;
He said, and his voice trembled as he said :
" What thinkest thou, Korah, of these dreadful sounds,
Sounds as of thunder and of trumpet blown ?
And of the mountain all in rolling smoke
And quaking from the bottom to the top ?"
" Why, truly," answered Korah, " all is strange.
And Moses has of all astutely made
The utmost possible, to serve his turn.
Thou shouldst remember all this region is
New to us all, unknown, except to him.
He knows it well, from having haunted here
Those forty years of shepherdhood he passed
With Jethro in the land of Midian ;
Hence he the habits of the climate here
And humors of the weather understands,
And how this monstrous mountain will behave
Upon occasion, probably by him
Forecalculated easily at need,

And, as I said, bent to his purposes.
So I interpret what confronts us here
Of seeming-dreadful. We at least, O On,
Supposed to have some gift of leadership,
Some judgment, some stability of mind,
To serve this host withal, amenable
To every transient influence for change
From whim to whim, as mutable as wind —
We wiser owe it to ourselves to be
Composed and constant in the teeth of all
Whatever meets us terrible to them.”

“ Then deemest thou not,” so On replying said
“ That Moses really has, vouchsafed from God,
Communications of his will? ” “ Oh, yea,
Doubtless he has,” said Korah ; “ but we all,
With him, are holy to Jehovah ; he
Is not of God the only oracle.
The difference is, that Moses, through his pride
And his self-confidence, surpasses us
In his pretensions and so in his power.
It needs but that we equal him in claim,
Or even perhaps a little overtop,
And we should be in power his peers, as peers

By right we are with him in privilege.
Here is the secret of all power with men :
He has precedence who precedence takes.
Moses has hitherto precedence taken,
And therefore hitherto precedence had ;
But he shall find at length another may
Dispute precedence with His Haughtiness,
Haply prevailing. Wait, and we shall see.
There only wants some one to front him, who
Shall in so far be like him, not to lack
The courage of his opportunity.
The contest will be simply one of will
In duel against will ; the stronger will
Wins as of course. Whose is the strongest will
In this camp, Moses' or another's, thou,
O On, shalt upon fit occasion see.
The event will prove ; I welcome the event !”

Korah ceased speaking with significance .
Couched in the manner of his ceasing which
Continued his discourse impressively
Beyond what any added words had done.
On was half shamed, he was persuaded half,
And for the present wholly overcome.

If he had thoughts he did not utter them ;
He kept them close and made no more demur.
Korah's the natural ascendant was,
The natural ascendant had prevailed.
But other natural ascendant, On,
Not stronger but at closer quarters felt,
Would afterward confess, and thus at last
So as by fire be saved from dreadful doom.

Pharimoh, with his different age, his heart
Different, a heart of native loyalty,
As ready to believe and to obey,
As Korah's was to doubt and to rebel,
Heart open-windowed to admit the light
That toward it howsoever shone from God —
Pharimoh, different thus from Korah, was
From Korah differently far impressed.
Perhaps besides, the aspect of the mount,
Austere and awful even when in repose,
And the grim aspect of the wilderness —
Contrasted each with Egypt's fertile plains
Familiar to him from his infancy —
Found something in the spirit of the youth
That lacked in Korah's, a susceptible,

Assimilative sense of the sublime ;
So that when those august theophanies
And dread appeared before him on the mount,
He indeed trembled like the rest, but not
With terror like the rest, only with awe,
Awe that mixed in it a delicious strain
Of secret exaltation and delight ;
Yet no compunctious visitings meanwhile
Felt he, nay, but no doubt, to discompose
His mind and lead him to draw back his steps
From the bold path which soon he hoped to tread ;
His conscience wanted light, but was at peace.

The people ranged at safe remove in mass
About the mount, and tremulous to hear,
God, condescending to a voice and words,
Spoke in their ears and said :

“ Lo, other gods

“ Than me thou shalt not have.

“ Thou shalt not make

“ Thyself a graven image, shalt not make

“ Whatever likeness of whatever thing

“ In heaven above or in the earth beneath
“ Or in the water underneath the earth,
“ To bow thyself before them and to serve ;
“ For I, Jehovah, am a jealous God,
“ Abiding none in rivalry with me
“ Or partnership of godhead, visiting
“ The iniquity committed by the fathers
“ Upon the children, yea, upon the third,
“ And even upon the fourth descent of those
“ Who hate me ; and to those who, loving me,
“ Keep my commandments, lovingkindness showing
“ To thousands upon thousands of their kind.

“ Thou shalt not thy God’s name, Jehovah, take
“ In vain, for him Jehovah will nowise
“ Hold guiltless who dares take his name in vain.

“ Remember thou the sabbath day to keep
“ It holy, separate from other days ;
“ The six days thou shalt labor and do all
“ Thy work, but the seventh day a sabbath is
“ Holy unto thy God Jehovah ; work
“ Thou shalt not do therein, nor only thou,
“ Thy son, thy daughter, servant, man or maid,

- “ Nay, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger who
“ May be within thy gates; for in six days
“ Jehovah made heaven, earth, the sea, with all
“ That in them is, and rested the seventh day:
“ Wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day,
“ Making it holy with his hallowing word.
- “ Thy father and thy mother honor thou,
“ That so thy days prolonged may be within
“ The land thy God Jehovah giveth thee.
- “ Thou shalt not take the life of brother man.
- “ Thou shalt not an adultery commit.
- “ Thou shalt not aught that is another's take.
- “ Thou shalt not to thy neighbor's injury
“ That which is false as true instead attest.
- “ Thou shalt not in thy heart desire for thine
“ Thy neighbor's house; thy neighbor's wife shalt
 thou
“ Not in thy heart desire for thine; nor man

“ Nor maid among his servants ; nor his ox ;
“ Nor yet his ass ; nor whatsoever else
“ Of thy beholding that thy neighbor's is.”

Preluded by such signs majestic,
From God descended on the mount of God —
Majestic, but more, significant
Of power, of power that might be also wrath
Toward disobedience — thus, that fateful day,
In such a voice from heaven was such a law
Heard by the trembling ears of Israel —
Far heard since, in the ears of all mankind
And sanctioned by the silent thunder-peals,
More solemn yet, to whoso hears aright,
Of providence divine in history!
Alas, that then so soon, as afterward
So oft, on Israel should so terribly
Be wreaked the threats denounced from Sinai top —
Threats all in grace, although in wrath, fulfilled!
Grace even in wrath, a paradox of God,
Then wondrously resolved when on the cross
Mercy and judgment reconciled clasped hands
And kissed each other for eternal peace —
Met in the person of the Crucified,

The Lamb before the world was founded slain!

A law had so been spoken that, aright
Interpreted, all righteousness concludes,
Enjoining love supreme toward God — for love
Adoring and obedient enjoining —
With love of neighbor equalling love of self.
But with such law beneficent proclaimed
The Giver of the law was not content,
He pressed it with pathetic appeal;
While yet, considerate of the people's plight,
They being with terror wholly overcome,
He with his own voice spoke to them no more,
But gave his servant Moses words for them.
For they the thunderings and the lightnings all
And noise of trumpet and the mount in smoke
Involved and violently quaking, saw,
Or heard, or felt, and they removed far off
And so, fain to escape destruction, stood.
They begged of Moses: "Lo, speak with us thou,
And we will hear thee as the mouth of God,
But let not God speak with us lest we die!"
Moses had pity of their abject case,
And said: "Fear not; God is not thus come down

To harm you, but to prove you is he come,
And that his fear may fend you safe from sin."

So then the people standing yet far off,
Moses, the meek man, unafraid, drew nigh
Alone to the thick darkness where God was.
Jehovah then bade Moses say to them:
"Lo, ye have seen, O house of Israel,
How I, your God, have talked with you from heaven."

The ineffable compassion of their God!
He, to persuade his chosen to their good,
Had condescended to be eloquent!
With such reminder of his grace to them,
He pleaded with them for their loyalty:
"Make ye yourselves no gods to be with me,
In partnership of godhead with myself,
Who am alone, and from eternity,
One God, your God, Jehovah is my name.
Lo, gods of silver make not to yourselves,
Nor gods of gold. Beware, refrain, beware!"

But Moses, before going down again
To give such message to the host — he still

Pavilioned in that darkness with the Lord —
Received from him instructions that might guide
His judgship of the people, and remain
Thenceforth to them their rules of righteousness
When they should be a nation in new seats.
These finished, at dismissal to go down,
Moses was bidden in his next ascent
Bring with him Aaron to Jehovah there,
And Nadab and Abihu (naught should lack
Of gracious privilege from God, to win,
If they might yet be won, to strike with awe,
If they of awe were capable, these two,
And save them from the doom they would invoke !),
Yea, Nadab and Abihu, and, besides,
Chosen elders of the people, all to bide
At distance while drew nigh Moses alone.

So Moses came and told the people all
Jehovah had vouchsafed to say for them.
And these things and such things as these he had
Vouchsafed to say, of import strict and sweet,
A lovely gospel couched in terms of law:

“ A sojourner thou shalt not wrong, for ye

“ Sojourners were yourselves in Egypt once.”

“ The poor thou shalt not favor in their cause.”

“ Thou shalt not wrest the judgment due the poor.”

“ No bribe shalt thou receive ; what doth a bribe ?

“ It blindeth eyes that would without it see ;

“ His words it wresteth who would else judge right.”

“ Widows and orphans ye shall not afflict.

“ If thou at all afflict them and they cry

“ To me at all, verily I will hear

“ Their cry ; for gracious am I, therefore wroth

“ Against the worker of iniquity —

“ Their cry will hear, and hot will wax my wrath

“ Against you, widows shall your wives become,

“ Orphans your children — ye shall not escape.”

“ Within the six days shalt thou do thy work,

“ And on the seventh day thou shalt sabbath keep —

“ That not thyself alone, but with thyself

“ Thine ox may rest, also thine ass as well,

“ And that thy handmaid's son, the sojourner

“Perchance within thy house, may be refreshed.”

“And take ye heed herein, let not the name
“Of other gods once come upon your lips.”

The self-commending virtue of such laws
Not to leave sole and unsupported quite,
As well sufficing by itself to win
Heed and obedience from his chosen, God
Grave sanction adds of promise and of threat.
All that a God, all-wise, omnipotent,
Could do, he did — alas, in vain! — to save
Who would not let themselves be saved, who chose
Destruction, and who had from God their choice.
“Behold,” Jehovah said, “an angel I
Before thee send to keep thee by the way
And bring thee to the place prepared for thee.
Beware, take heed, hearken ye to his voice,
Provoke him not, for he will not relent
To pardon your transgression; lo, my name
Is in him; yea, none other than myself
Is he. If thou wilt hearken to his voice
Indeed and do whatever I command,
Then to thy foes I will myself be foe,

And adversary to thine adversaries.
My angel shall before thee go, a guide,
A guard, and bring thee to the Amorite,
The Hittite, Perizzite, and Canaanite,
Hivite, and Jebusite, and I, even I,
Will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow thyself
Before their gods, or serve them, thou shalt not
In any manner follow in their ways ;
But overthrow them utterly shalt thou,
And all their pillars into pieces break.
No covenant with those peoples shalt thou join,
Nor with their gods; but thou shalt drive them out,
Lest, biding, they cause thee to sin against
Me ; for a snare it will not fail to be
To snare thee, if thou yield to serve their gods.”

When Moses all these words from God to them
Reported to the people, with one voice
They answered, in obedience prompt as light —
Easy obedience of the lips ! — “ Amen !
All that Jehovah bids us we will do.”
Not forty days thereafter, those same lips,
Those same light lips, will clamor for a god
Of man’s device, a graven god of gold,

In fashion a fourfooted beast, and cry,
Having obtained at Aaron's hands their wish,
" Here, Israel, is the god that brought you out
From Egypt, worship and bow down — your God !"
Such was the genius for religion theirs,
That nation's, who, forsooth, unhelped, evolved
The pure theistic faith for all mankind !

When Moses took his brother and went up,
With Nadab and Abihu in their train
And seventy of the elders of the host,
Into the mountain, they a vision there
Had of Jehovah, such a vision had
That they remembered of it only this :
Work of bright sapphire seemed beneath his feet,
Sapphire for clearness like the very heaven.
Thus these saw God ; but he to Moses said :
" Come up thou unto me into the mount,
And I will give into thy hands the stone
Tablets that I have written of the law,
Which thou shalt have it thine henceforth to teach."
So, Joshua rising with him, Moses rose
And bidden went into the mount of God,
First to the elders saying, " Bide ye here

For us until we come again to you.
Meanwhile, behold, if any have a cause,
Aaron and Hur shall judge it being with you.”
Moses went up and the cloud wrapt the mount,
And there the glory of Jehovah bode,
That cloud the mountain covering still, six days.
And on the seventh day from amidst the cloud
Jehovah called to Moses. In the eyes
Of all the host of Israel fixed to gaze,
The glory of Jehovah on the top
Of Sinai mountain was as if of fire —
The likeness of it like devouring fire.
And Moses went alone into the cloud,
Into the midst thereof alone went up
Into the mount, to bide there forty days,
Infolded with Jehovah in that cloud.
(He in a cloud of glory more benign
Will, after ages long, again be wrapt,
Upon a mountain of the Promised Land,
In secret with that Angel of the Lord
Who went before the host of Israel
In their wide wandering through the wilderness —
But who was humbled now to be a man —
And with him talk of the decease — for us —

He will accomplish at Jerusalem!)

On two points in especial of his law,
His covenant with the people of his choice,
Again and yet again Jehovah laid
Pathetic and prophetic emphasis:
They must not be enticed to alien gods;
They must his ordinance of the sabbath keep.
"Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths," said
Jehovah, his own sabbaths calling them,
As if appealing to a grateful sense
Of obligation to himself that bound
His people to a faster loyalty,
A more alert obedience, of love;
By that inducement which ennobles most,
Divinely seeking so to win their feet
Into the pathway toward their own true good.
And then, as if the sabbath had its end,
Its real end, for its highest end herein,
To keep God in the conscience of a world
Forever to forget him strangely prone,
He added: "For the sabbath is a sign
Between myself and you, a solemn sign
Forever, which may serve to make you know

That I Jehovah am, who chose you mine.
Therefore shall ye the sabbath holy keep
Throughout your generations evermore."

Amid that mountain's awful solitude,
To Moses in communion with his God
Through forty days and forty nights prolonged,
He was divinely given a ritual
To be by Israel observed, which might,
Through its minute commandments manifold
Proceeding from the mouth and hand of God
And claiming some obedience every hour,
Be a tuition for remembering him
As living, personal, supreme, and one,
And a God condescending to have thoughts
Concerning men and wishes for their good
Which they might, if they would, fulfil for him —
Schoolmaster thus to a selected race
Islanded in a universal sea
Weltering round them of idolatry,
To be a nurse to theism for mankind.

Those forty days of such instruction past,
Moses came down with Joshua from the mount.

As they descended slowly to the plain,
Joshua said to Moses: "Wilt thou hear
At this time briefly somewhat as I judge
Of import touching that Egyptian prince,
Pharimoh, late a sharer of my tent?"
"Say on," Moses replied, "the youth is dear
To me." And Joshua said: "For days and days
I had seen Pharimoh beyond his wont,
His social wont, detached from common things,
Absent in air as if within himself
Revolving serious thoughts. Not to infringe
His rightful privilege of privacy
In his own mind — since he to me but grave
Seemed and not sad, and therefore in no need
Of comfort from a brother's sympathy —
I did not, for I would not, ask him aught;
And, whether waiting for his counsel ripe
To grow and ready to be shown, he held
His peace, until those solemn days wherein
We sanctified ourselves before the mount.
Then, in the quiet of those days, he broke
His silence and told me his thought, and asked
Me, not indeed how wise it seemed to me,
But rather only how to make it fact.

His thought is, in all loving loyalty
Toward thee and his adoptive people held,
To lead back into Egypt such as choose
Thither to follow him, out of this host —
Those disaffected and recalcitrant,
He means, judged by him to be burdensome
Only, and useful not at all to thee —
Such back again to Egypt lead, and there,
With them for staff to lean upon therein,
Set up a state to be confederate
With Israel — a renovated realm
From out the dust of desolation reared,
A different Egypt consecrate to God,
Twin witness of Jehovah with ourselves.”

Moses had only time to make reply,
“Send Pharimoh to me,” when Joshua
Suddenly and in wide diversion said :
“I hear a tumult from the camp below ;
It is a confused noise of battle there.”
But Moses’ aged ears caught not the sound.
Both listened as they still went down the mount,
And now some noises in a higher key,
Came tingling tensely into Moses’ ears,

And he said: "Nay, no sound of battle that;
Neither the shouting over victory,
Hear I, nor the lamenting of defeat;
It is a sound of singing that I hear."

They hasted down, to find a tragedy
Enacting at the bottom of the mount.

BOOK VIII.
THE GOLDEN CALF.

THE people, secretly set on by Korah through his agents, had demanded of Aaron that he supply them with gods to go before them, and Aaron had made an image in gold of a calf, to meet the demand. The people saluted this image as the god that had brought them out of Egypt, and they were now giving themselves up to lasciviousness. Moses, in gesture of indignation, dashes in pieces the stone tablets on which Jehovah had inscribed the Ten Commandments. The golden calf he seizes and destroys, upbraiding the people for their sin. He expostulates with Aaron, and blames him severely. He then enjoins a terrible punishment for the host, which is executed. Moses appeals to Jehovah for the privilege of seeing his glory, and Jehovah condescends to grant him in part his request. Moses' face is seen by the people to shine, from his interviews with Jehovah. Nadab and Abihu sin their sin and meet their doom. Moses utters his thoughts and emotions in a psalm.

THE GOLDEN CALF.

A TRAGEDY it was of gayety
Wantoning in abandonment to lust,
That Moses found enacting in the camp.
For there was dance, with song, a travesty
Of worship paid in sensual rites and foul
Of self-indulgence, to a golden calf
Set up amid the camp to be a god ;
And all the people cried together, " Here,
Behold, O Israel, is the god that brought
Thee out of Egypt ; worship and bow down ! "
And Aaron, lest the idolatry should lack
Something to make the apostasy complete
And the offence most of disobedience,
Had proclamation made of festival
Unto Jehovah as a fellow god —
The Maker of the heaven and of the earth
Fellow in godship to a creature made,
To a fourfooted creature of his hand —
Nay, to such creature's mere similitude

Moulded and graven by the art of man!
If Aaron counted it perchance a stroke,
A happy stroke, of priestcraft on his part,
To hold a fickle people halfway true
Still to Jehovah — thus consorting him
With a base creature godship to their wish,
Mere measure of contentment for the time;
Or if, to the same purpose, he desired
That they should hold the calf they saw to be
Jehovah's own similitude in gold —
Then what a genius for religion his,
And what his value of one only God!

When Moses saw the mischief that was wrought,
The meek man then for once was overcome
Not to be meek. For the meek man is pure,
And purity must be severity,
And cannot meekness be, in face of sin
Such as was here. He in his hands had brought
Tablets of stone on the two faces both
Whereof the words were written of the law;
By God's own fingers they were written there.
Those tablets Moses lifted high above
His head and dashed them fiercely to the ground,

Exclaiming, " O apostate Israel,
Ye have broken your covenant with your God this day,
And I have broken thus before your eyes
The witness God had given me, written in stone
With his own fingers, of his oath to you
And promise of all grace and blessedness,
So ye would keep your covenant with him —
Which ye not even while he was writing it,
O perjured people of his choice, would keep!"
And Moses seized the impious calf of gold
And plunged it into furious flames of fire
Which melted it from its similitude,
And then the shapeless mass he shattered small
As into dust and, with indignant wrath
That ever hotter waxed as he went on
To give it its expression, strewed it wide
Upon the water and made Israel drink
Thereof, who dared not disobey him, cowed
By the majestic passion of their chief,
(So, later, would that Prophet like to him,
Rapt to consuming zeal on the behalf
Of the wronged temple at Jerusalem,
Cleanse it of outrage, single-handed he,
And a cowed throng of enemies looking on!)

There could not but be then between those twain,
Moses and Aaron, brothers as they were,
And Aaron elder, so in honor held
Before by Moses in the eyes of all —
There could not but be now between those twain
Scene other far by the whole host beheld.
The wrath of Moses suddenly a change
Suffered, a change ineffable ; it sank —
From passion which as if to very heaven
In flame had towered — it sank into a strain
Of pathos and appeal, wherein not less,
More rather, softened by remorse, it seemed.
“ And thou, O Aaron,” so the brother spoke,
In modulated tone of tenderness,
As seeking some impossible excuse
That might extenuate his brother’s blame —
But how such self-restraint on Moses’ part,
And instinct to relieve him if he may,
Solves all the joints in Aaron’s panoply
Of self-defence, and lays him naked quite
To take into the quick the gentle stroke
Of heavy accusation which must fall! —
“ And thou, O Aaron, tell me, what did they,
This people, do to thee to put a force

Upon thee great enough to make thee bring
This sin, this heinous sin, upon their heads?"

When Moses asked this question, in desire
Somehow to shift, in part at least, the blame
From Aaron if he might, he well enough,
It may be, knew that here was Korah's work;
But wisely he refrained from hinting him,
Or letting it in any wise appear
That he suspected in his kinsman lack
Of loyalty toward God or toward himself.
Did such ill fruit hang ripening on that bough?
Let it hang undisturbed and ripen well!
But in truth Korah had contrived it all.
He himself wondered what the reason was
That Moses was absenting him so long.
Had there some accident befallen him?
Would he perhaps never be seen again?
The thought was well-nigh hope in Korah's breast.
Who then would be the leader of the host?
Would it not be himself? Who worthier?
At any rate, the time was opportune
To wean the people from allegiance
To Moses, and attach them to himself.

The laws that Moses had announced to them
Were over-strict, severe, unreasonable,
They could not be obeyed, ought not to be,
People should have some freedom to indulge
Their natural cravings for the joys of sense.
A little license in their regimen
Was needful, like what Israel enjoyed
In Egypt — let them have their old-time gods,
Who would not frown too sourly on delight.
So Korah ran on in his thought, until
At length he sent his emissaries out
To stir the people up to their demand
Of Aaron that he give them back their gods.
On Aaron Korah easily prevailed
To grant the insurgent people what they asked ;
Aaron, without his brother at his side,
Was but as potter's clay in Korah's hands.
When Moses said to Aaron, " What did they,
This people, do to thee ? " he might have said
(But that he would not individual be),
' How was it Korah wrought on thee for this ? '

The anguished brother's-heart in him could not
Make Moses yield so far to sympathy

For Aaron as one moment to forget
His pity for a people needing rule,
Not complaisance, to save them from themselves.
So, seeking lenient, he enhancement found
Instead, of Aaron's weak complicity.
But, quenched not by the tenderness, the wrath
Of Moses was by Aaron fiercely felt;
It turned to ash the fibre of the man.
Weakly he answered, if not wickedly:
"Let not the anger of my lord wax hot,
Thou knowest the people are on evil set,
They came to me and said, 'Make thou us gods
To go before us; as for Moses, him
Who brought us out of Egypt, we know not
What is become of him.' So I bade them
Bring me their ornaments of gold, and I
Cast it into the fire, and presently
Behold, a wonder, there came out this calf!"

Whether in pity of such abjectness,
Pity and shame commingled, to behold
His brother thus to childishness reduced
In deprecation and vain self-excuse,
Moses to Aaron's words no answer made.

Instead, the meek man's anger flamed again
Against the people whom he loved too well
To spare them from deserved punishment —
Which, though at present direful cost of pain,
To himself as to them, might go some way
Toward curing them, if indeed possible
Were cure — to the advantage of mankind
In every age to follow, every clime —
Of that addiction to idolatry,
Which else had grown perpetual through all time,
As it was universal through the world.

Now Moses had already in the mount
Been bidden by Jehovah hasten down,
“For,” said he, using human ways of speech
And speaking like a justly angered man,
Not now as if the people were his own,
And he from bondage had delivered them —
“For, lo,” he said to Moses, “they whom thou
Out of the land of Egypt hither broughtest,
Thy people, have themselves corrupted; they
Have turned aside thus quickly from the way
Which I commanded them; a molten calf
They have fashioned for themselves and worshipped it,

Crying, ' Here is thy god, O Israel,
The god that brought thee from thy bondage forth.
Enough, enough, already have I seen
Of such a people ; lo, stiffnecked are they.
Let me alone now, let mine anger wax
Unhindered hot against them, to consume
Them utterly, and I of thee will make
For mine a mighty nation in their room."

A test it was for Moses ; to a man
Less meek than he it had temptation been.
Moses was equal to it ; he replied,
And reverently rose to a sublime
Audacity which justified itself :
" Jehovah, why permit thy wrath to rage
Against thy people, whom, with mighty hand
And power, thou hast from Egypt hither brought ?
Why should the Egyptians have it to declare,
' For evil did he bring them forth, to slay
Them in the mountains and consume them quite
To be on the earth's face beheld no more.
Remember Abraham and Isaac, thou,
And Israel ' " — With instinctive eloquence
He named the patriarch, his forefather, thus

By that name which once Jacob earned from him
Whom he all night at Jabbok wrestled with
And overcame — the name too whereby thence
The chosen seed themselves were after called.
With such a climax to his eloquence
In pleading, Moses pleaded: “ Unto those
Thy servants — wilt thou not remember? — thou
By thine own self didst swear and say to them,
Lo, your seed will I multiply to be
For number like the uncounted stars of heaven,
And all the goodly land whereof I spake,
To your seed will I give it, to possess
And make it their perpetual heritage.”

Jehovah willingly persuaded was
By the eloquence in prayer himself inspired
To Moses, and he graciously forbore
Destroying now the people of his choice;
Nevertheless a dreadful chastisement
He must inflict upon them — for their good,
And through them for the good of all mankind;
Themselves compelled to wreak it on themselves!

With no blank demonstration such as words

Or any acts in symbol could supply,
Was Moses suffered to content his wrath.
He, by Jehovah's bidding, took his stand
In the camp's gate and cried aloud : " Whoso
Is on Jehovah's side, hither to me !"
Why did not the whole host of them betimes
Repent and hasten to their leader's side ?
But all the sons of Levi came to him,
And Moses told them : " Thus Jehovah saith,
' Put ye each man his sword upon his thigh
And forth from gate to gate throughout the camp
Go slaying, no discrimination made,
Each man his brother, each his bosom friend.'"
A dreadful witness by Jehovah borne,
A dreadful vindication of himself !
And such an awe was on the multitude,
Such a paralysis from sense of sin,
That no resistance to their punishment
Offered the guilty many to the few ;
And on that bloody day of vengeance fell
Three thousand of the perjured in the camp.
If even at cost like this there had been purged
That mischief for all time from out those hearts !
In all else fickle, fixed and fast in sin !

Discipline through deserved punishment
It was; no expiation had been wrought
By all that sacrifice in human blood.
Still guilty before God the people were;
They needed still to be forgiven their sin.
And Moses undertook on their behalf
To intercede with God. He said to them:
“ A great sin ye have sinned, and I will go
Before Jehovah for you and beseech
That he forgive you yet.” So Moses went
And to Jehovah said: “ Oh, a great sin
Have sinned this people, having gods of gold
Made for themselves. Yet now if but thou wilt
Forgive their sin! If not, I pray thee blot
My name from out the book which thou hast written !”

A great vicarious heart it was, the heart
That beat in Moses' bosom. (So it was,
Long after, that the passionate patriot Paul,
Despite his all-consuming love of him,
Protested he would be accursed from Christ,
If thus he might but Israel save, his kin,
His brethren, dearer to him than himself.)

Had they, with tardy true repentance drawn,
Even then but rallied to Jehovah's side —
That people prayed for so, — and been forgiven,
Freely and fully graciously forgiven !
Jehovah answered strictly : " Whoso hath
Sinned against me, his name will I blot out,
Not thine, from my memorial book. But thou,
Go lead the people onward to the place
Appointed for them ; lo, mine angel goes
Before thee, but know thou that in the day
Of visitation I will visit then
Their sin upon them." And Jehovah smote
The people for that they had made the calf
That Aaron made.

And when the people heard
The evil tidings that Jehovah God
Would not be in the midst of them, lest he
Perforce consume them in the way, they mourned ;
And no man of them wore his ornaments
From Horeb onward to the Promised Land.
A troubled pilgrimage — which might have been
Joyous and safe, Jehovah in the midst !

Amid the many fearful breakings forth
From heaven of power offended and incensed
To wrath and instant punishment of sin —
All making for the exaltation still
Of Moses and the strengthening of his rule —
Korah his force of domination found
Tasked to its very uttermost to hold
Together his confederacy against
The strong disintegrating drift it felt.
But the more difficult his task, the more
To achieve it seemed to him imperative ;
By the sheer impact of his will he won.
He Dathan and Abiram, first of all,
Made sure of, and through these in part he dealt
With all the others one by one ; he shamed,
He stormed, he threatened, he browbeat, he stooped
To wheedle and cajole ; he pointed out
How Moses, by the mixing of himself
With so much terrible severity
Against the host, though it might something gain
Him for the moment by inspiring fear,
Was treasuring up resentment in their hearts
Toward himself which, however it might sleep
Or smoulder for a season, smothered down,

Was certain later to burst out in flame.
That hour of conflagration when it came
Must find them not dispersed, dispirited,
But an unbroken league of mutual hearts,
Hearts conscious each of other's constancy,
And ready all their ripe reward to reap.
On this point he could rest in confidence ;
For long since, with Titanic energy,
With industry Titanic, he had wrought,
Through many trusty minions of his will,
Into the breasts of all, the sentiment
That Moses was himself responsible
Not only for the hardships they endured,
But for the scaths they suffered as from God.
The spirit thus infused prepared the cry
Which will at length find itself words to say,
In acrid inculpation and complaint
Involving Aaron with his brother : " Ye
Have killed the people of Jehovah, ye !"
Not merely, therefore, a wild heady mob
Of stiffnecked, mutinous people addle-brained
Rendered so hard his task of leadership
To Moses ; he was coping all the while
With an alert concealed hostility

Which, in exhaustless energy of will
Inciting to exertion without pause,
In strength, astuteness, all resource indeed
Save the support of overruling power,
Was only less than a full equal match
For even the great protagonist himself.

Despite so much access to the divine
Vouchsafed him by Jehovah in the mount,
Moses was conscious yet of one desire,
Of one sublime desire, not satisfied —
A never-to-be-satisfied desire,
Whatever mortal mind may cherish it! —
Desire of vision of the infinite.
Vision eternally impossible
Even to the mortal glorying over death
In triumph-robcs of immortality —
Need were the finite should be infinite !

Moses his converse with Jehovah felt
To have been but an official privilege,
Say rather a responsibility
Which he needs must as mediator bear ;
If now a grace from God more personal

He might aspire to! And he prayed: "If I
Have indeed found such favor in thy sight,
I pray thee, O Jehovah, show me now
Thy glory!" Moses knew not what he asked;
But exquisitely gracious the reply:
"Thou canst not see my face; nowise shall man
See me and live. But by me is a place
Where thou upon the Horeb rock shalt stand,
And I will cause my glory to pass by.
Safe there within a crevice of the rock
I will place thee and hide thee with my hand,
Until my too much glory has passed by;
Then I will take my shielding hand away
And thou shalt see what thou canst see and live,
The rearward of my glory passing by.
My face is not by mortal to be seen."

The vision which those seventy elders had,
With Moses, of Jehovah on the mount,
Was such as might be in some little part
Set forth in human words; what Moses saw
In Horeb from his crevice in the rock
That day, albeit but the vanishing
Of God's insufferable glory shown

One instant as it passed intensely by,
Was such an incandescency of glow
That words essaying to describe it would
Have melted in the twinkling of an eye,
And Moses not even sought to utter it.
(So Paul, caught up to the third heaven of God,
Heard words which he declared unutterable,
And sealed in a perpetual silence left.)

After such interlude of privilege
By the Divine indulgence granted him,
To reassure his confidence that he
Indeed found favor in Jehovah's sight,
Moses once more was summoned to the mount,
And again forty days and forty nights,
As mediator of the law to man,
Spent, this time fasting and alone with God.
Tablets of stone, which he, by God's behest,
After the fashion of those stones he broke,
Had with his own hand hewn, he brought with him,
And thereupon were written once again
The statutes of the covenant sworn between
Jehovah and the people of his choice.
When Moses now descended from the mount

Upon whose hidden top he had so long
Held solitary converse with his God,
His face shone, and he knew it not, with beams
Effulgent from it like a bloom of light
Bursting in buds of efflorescent sheen.
The people saw it, and instinctively
Far off from such theophany retired
In awe. Moses beholding this called out
To them, and Aaron with the rulers now
Came back toward him and heard him speak, whereby
The people all were heartened to approach,
And he delivered to them all the law
Given him by Jehovah in the mount.
His countenance, which had been illumined so,
He, when he left off speaking, veiled from view,
That no one saw the glory disappear.
But, after, when he went to meet with God,
Moses removed the veil from off his face.

It was while yet the host of Israel
Camped about Sinai, and Jehovah yet
His mountain made the footstool of his feet,
That Nadab and Abihu sinned the sin
Which on them drew that vengeful fire from heaven.

Fulfilling the priest's office, they — alas,
Profanely disobedient through wine
Indulged in as their desperate recourse
For rally from the wretchedness wherewith
They paid in fatal sequel for their part
In that debauch before the golden calf —
Those brothers, doubly thus disqualified,
Fire not commanded for their censers took,
Fire from Jehovah's holy altar not ;
And, burning incense so before the Lord,
Made it to him an odor of offence.
Instantly flames enwrapped them where they stood
That they twain breathed the breath of life no more.
Terrible retribution of their sin !
Terrible vindication of the claim
Jehovah, for the good of human kind,
Made, and still makes, to strict obedience.
And others with Jehovah must take part
Against the sin, or in the guilt be held ;
Yea, Aaron, though their father, must forbear
To mourn such doom befallen his eldest sons ;
And their two younger brothers must forbear —
Lest they too sin the sin and die the death.
One anguished word alone, which would have vent,

Out from the father's bursting bosom broke.
When Moses chided him that he had left
One thing required of him as priest not done,
"Surely God would not have me eat this day —
And such things have befallen me!" he said.
Perhaps some anguish of remorse, from sense
Of a complicity in fault with them,
He having not restrained them as he should
From the excesses of their wayward youth,
And having yielded so before their eyes
Late in the sin of that idolatry —
Perhaps such consciousness of guilt his own
Embittered now his sorrow for his sons.

So many and so awful signs did God
Send in compassionate warning down to men,
And not even yet would they their lesson learn.

The host of Israel now from underneath
The beetling brow of Sinai threatening them,
Or, though its thunder slumbered, seeming still
To threaten them — full gladly breaking up
A camp they had found so formidably pitched —
Set forth upon their pilgrimages thence.

But, ere they went, the lonely and sublime
Spirit of Moses, musing on the world,
The pathos of it, and the transiency,
In contrast with the eternity of Him,
The changelessness, the wisdom, and the power,
Who made the world and all that in it is,
Who, as in but a moment with a breath,
Could sweep into destruction what he made —
So musing, tuned his musing into psalm.
He gazed upon mount Sinai, then in turn
Upon the encampment of the Israelites;
The homelessness of these, therewith the thought
Of the long homelessness of Israel's race
Through many generations until now,
The evanescence of their state on earth,
The mountain's look of everlastingness,
Saddened him, and he raised his thought to God,
As a child tired of wandering thinks of home.
His melancholy meditation then
Solemnly into psalm and worship broke:

“ Lord, thou, in all our generations, thou

“ Alone, hast been the home of Israel.

“ Before were born the mountains, yea, before

- “ The earth, thou, and the world, hadst brought to
birth,
“ Even from everlasting ages thou
“ To everlasting ages bidest God.
“ Thou to destruction turnest man, and sayest
“ ‘ Children of men, return ye to the naught
“ From which at my commandment first ye sprang!’
“ For, in thy sight, what are a thousand years?
“ They are as yesterday when it is gone,
“ Even as a watch passed in the night are they.
“ Thou carriest men away as with a flood;
“ They are as quickly vanished as a sleep.
“ Regarded in the morning of their youth,
“ Like to the grass which groweth up they are;
“ It in the morning groweth up with pride,
“ It is cut down to wither at evenfall.
“ For we in thy displeasure are consumed,
“ And troubled are we in thy kindled wrath.
“ Our misdeeds all thou hast before thee set,
“ Our secret sins in the relentless light
“ That from thy face a bright effulgence streams.
“ For our few days, they all are in thy wrath
“ Spent, and it is as in a sigh breathed forth
“ We bring our years to their perpetual end.

“ Threescore and ten the years are of our life,
“ Or even by reason of strength haply fourscore,
“ Yet labor still and sorrow is their pride ;
“ It is gone quickly and we fly away.
“ Who knows the power thine anger wields ; thy
 wrath,
“ To the full measure of the fear of right
“ Due to thy name ? So teach us thou our days
“ To number that we for ourselves may win
“ A heart of wisdom ! Turn, Jehovah, turn,
“ How long, how long ? Repent thee, oh, repent,
“ Concerning us thy servants ! Satisfy
“ Us in the morning with thy lovingkindness,
“ That we henceforth may all our days be glad ;
“ Make thou us glad according to the days
“ Wherein thou hast afflicted us, the years
“ Wherein we have seen evil at thy hands.
“ We pray thee let thy hand be manifest
“ Unto thy servants ; on our children rest
“ Thy glory evermore ! God’s favor be,
“ The favor of our God Jehovah be,
“ Upon us, and establish thou the work
“ We work upon us, yea, the work of hands
“ Even such as our hands are, establish it ! ”

Beneath the shadow of the mount of God,
Amid a waste of wilderness around,
Moses so eased the burden of his heart ;
He had beat it out in pulses and in rhythms
Of music and of passion and of thought,
Raised to the pitch of worship and attuned,
For ages upon ages yet to be.

BOOK IX.
THE GREAT PYRAMID.

KORAH and his confederates are stayed back by the theophanies of Sinai from any overt acts, even from assembling, in furtherance of their rebellious designs. Pharimoh is thus left largely to himself to brood over his project. He talks with Mahlah about it, she discouraging while not opposing it. The two are led on to discuss the problem of the universe. They wonder together at the human tendency to apostatize from God. They raise the question whether man began in low estate, almost brutal, and struggled upward ; or rather began on a high level and gradually declined to low and lower. Pharimoh relates his experience in visiting the Great Pyramid, and the two draw instruction on the point of their inquiry from what he then saw and was taught. Pharimoh reverts to his plan, for light on which they had entered into their wide-ranging discussion.

THE GREAT PYRAMID.

KORAH and his accomplices, conspired
To tamper with the multitude and vex
The leadership of Moses with attempt
To undermine his just authority
That they a standard of revolt might raise
At last and overthrow him — these perforce,
Through all those days of dread theophany
Upon mount Sinai (save that secretly
They stirred the people up to their wild cry
For something they could worship made with hands),
Were stayed back still from any open act
Of traitorhood, nay, from assembling even
For counselling together.

Pharimoh

Was thus remitted to himself the while ;
But Mahlah was an influence to restrain,
Opposing not, his oversanguine zeal
In dwelling on his unrelinquished aim.
When the mad mutinous multitude cried out

For idol gods, and having got their calf
Of gold from Aaron's weakling hands, fell down
In abject worship of it, Mahlah then
To Pharimoh said: "See, O Pharimoh,
See of what stuff these people all are made.
What thinkest thou? Is there good hope that such
Vain foolish people, not to say such vile,
Such wicked, could be purged through thee so pure
Of all their folly, all their wickedness,
As to become at length, wielded by thee,
Fit instruments, fit and effectual,
For purging Egypt too, and making it
A kingdom holy to Jehovah God?"

"What questions askest thou!" said Pharimoh.
"They seem to search me through, and find me out,
And show myself to me. Thou makest thy doubt
Seem to be of the people, not of me;
And yet, O Mahlah, really it is of me.
The people are the same, whether or not
I have the conduct of them — whether I,
That is, or Moses, have the leadership.
Thou dost not doubt, I trow, that in the end
These froward people will somehow be saved

Through Moses; then why not through me? — except
Of me thou doubttest, while of Moses not.
Thou doubttest of me, then, and well may I,
With thee, doubt of myself — and yet — and yet” —

“Nay, but,” so Mahlah spoke, forestalling him,
“Indeed I do not doubt of thee at all,
Set in comparison with Moses even.
I cannot doubt, I do not doubt, that God,
Had that but been his high will, might have chosen
My Pharimoh to Moses’ task as well
As chosen Moses to it. But his choice
Would then have been to have thee Hebrew, not
Egyptian; for his choice began at birth
With Moses, nay, but earlier even than that,
Now that I think of it — this tract of thought
To me is new, I fear to lose my way! —
But our God’s choice of Moses to his task
Was after, and long after, he had chosen
Israel to be peculiarly his own;
So out of chosen Israel needs must come
Jehovah’s chosen servant for this task.
It is not, so at least to me it seems,
That Moses in himself was worthier

Than in thyself art thou, that God chose him
Rather than thee, to do this mighty work.
But so it was, him and not thee God chose.
Therefore, thou see'st, it is not that I doubt
Of thee concerning that high aim of thine ;
But only that I would be well assured
That God has chosen thee for it, it for thee."

Mahlah was thinking as she talked ; her talk
Was indeed half soliloquy, not talk,
Pure groping tentative of thought given voice.
And Pharimoh, on his part, gave his heed
To her not as if challenged to reply,
Rather as if provoked himself to think.
He thought, and after pause in thought, replied
Obliquely with a question tentative
In turn which, though in form of Mahlah asked,
In fact he asked too of himself not less.
They twain were thinking with one mind, one heart,
Together — not in vain, though to result
None in solution of those world-old doubts
And questions and despairs which, baffled, seek
The whence, the why, the whither, of the world.
Thinking aloud, to Mahlah, Pharimoh :

“ The choice by God of peoples and of men
To work his will withal in history —
How it perplexes me — the thought of it !
Thou canst not think Jehovah makes his choice
With no regard to reason in his choice.
Was it not for a fitness in him seen,
Or foreseen, that Jehovah fixed his choice
On Moses for the great work that he works ? ”

“ It were full easy to imagine that,”
Said Mahlah, “ Moses is so great a man ;
But then my people, my dear Hebrew kin,
Dear all of them to me by tie of blood,
What shall we say of *them*, as choice of God
For their work in the world — *they* put in trust
Of holy treasure to enrich mankind,
They so unworthy and so faithless found
Already, underneath the awful brow
Of this mount Sinai whence but yesterday
The thunderings and the lightnings of his power
Proclaimed Jehovah God and God alone !
It is indeed a deep, dark mystery,
The way Jehovah takes with men, — both men
Singly, I mean, and nations too.”

“ And yet,”

Said Pharimoh, “ there peradventure was
No other people in the world more fit
Than was thine own to be so put in trust
Of the rich treasure of the truth of God.
My own doubt about Moses, whether he
Were not Jehovah’s choice as seen so fit,
Flashed in upon my mind a foolish thought :
What if, hereafter, long, long ages hence,
When Israel shall have learned their lesson well,
And become safely firm in loyalty
To their Jehovah God, it then occur
To wise men, looking backward on the course
Of the experience of mankind, to think
That Israel was chosen because so fit
The office to fulfil of guide to men
In knowledge of the living God ; or even
That never was there any choice of them,
But only fitness in them looked like choice ;
That Israel in fact by their own light,
Untaught, unguided, worked their lesson out
And found God, or invented him, themselves.
A strange whim of forecasting thought in me,
Or fancy — but it is a world so strange ! ”

“ A strange world, yea, and our own thoughts how
strange ! ”

Said Mahlah ; “ thou wert looking forward, I
The while was looking backward, wondering
Whether thy people ever in the past
Haply knew God, the true, the only ; then,
If they did know him once, how afterward
They lost the knowledge of him, and in place
Of their Creator fashioned for themselves
Gods out of creatures of his hand, and those,
Creatures of rank far lower than their own,
To worship and bow down to. What thinkest thou,
Did thine own people once know the true God ?
Or did they never ? And their present state,
Idolatrous, though in wisdom of the world
So well advanced — is it in truth a stage
Of onward and of upward reach toward God,
A reach, a struggle, that at length would end —
This of itself and with no outward help —
In triumph and arrival at the goal ? ”

“ A question dark to answer,” Pharimoh
Replied ; “ ‘ Finger of God ! ’ our wise men once,
Thou wilt remember, as of force compelled,

And speaking as almost against their will,
Exclaimed to Pharaoh. I have sometimes guessed
That those we called our wise men themselves knew
More than they wished their fellow men to know
Of the true God, that in unrighteousness
They held the truth back knowing it, choked it down,
And let the people welter in their dark,
Having no hope and Godless in the world.
I must not wrong them, judging them amiss ;
And, whether right or wrong in my surmise,
I do not answer so thy question, which is dark
To answer, as I said. It still remains
To wonder, Did our wise men, of themselves,
Attain to know God ? — if so be they knew.”

“ Will Pharimoh now let me make my guess ? ”
A sudden intuition woman-like
Flashing its light upon her, Mahlah said :
“ It seems to me that any man or men
Who had, sincerely seeking, found out God,
Would, in that same sincerity of soul,
Gladly have shared their knowledge to the world.
Such seekers, being finders once become,
Could not have kept their precious finding hid,

Have 'choked it down,' as thy word was. They must,
They must, have published it abroad."

She spoke

With honest passion of conviction thus ;
And Pharimoh drew out the inference
Which Mahlah, half unconsciously, but half
Of modest purpose not to say too much
And seem to lead the way, had latent left
Within her words: " Then not as seekers they,
The Egyptian wise men, of themselves, unhelped,
Achieved their knowledge of the living God.
How then came they into possession of it ?
To such unworthy, God would not reveal
Himself. There is a third way possible,
And other none seems possible to me :
They must have got it by inheritance
From immemorial ages long foregone,
Lost ages, happier than all ages since,
Ages when peradventure God with man
Held converse as a father with his child.
Mahlah, was ever such a time, thinkest thou? "

" Our Hebrew great forefather, Abraham, "

Said Mahlah, "talked with God and God with him.
That was long, long ago, as seems to us,
But it was only yesterday, if we
In contrast think how long before it was
That Egypt had already to such height
Climbed of her splendor and her power. How long
Since was it that the pyramid was built,
The great one, built by Cheops for his tomb?"
"A thousand years, and more," said Pharimoh.
"And Egypt then, was she as great as since,
As much a mistress of all human lore?"
Mahlah inquired, with bearing on a thought
Of hers which, were it true, a ray of light
Upon the pathway of their quest might throw.

"The pyramid itself bears witness there,"
Said Pharimoh, "yields monumental proof
And indestructible. The ages since,
However great, are ages of decline,
Rather than of advance, in Egypt's wealth
Of wisdom to the arts of life applied."
"If Egypt, then, has rather lost than gained,"
Said Mahlah, "with the process of her years,
In point of other knowledge, is there ground,

Thinkest thou, for judging that in point of this,
 The highest knowledge, the most difficult
 To win, once won the easiest to let slip,
 As this strange lapse of Israel sadly shows,
 She has made gain instead, and from a start
 Beneath the bestial thought of God now hers,
 Has upward struggled and attained to that?"

“ Oh, nay, nay, nay,” as loth, said Pharimoh,
 And wishing, for the honor of his race,
 He could think otherwise, and take some pride
 In the achievement of his countrymen,
 “ No ground for judging so ; for, if there were,
 Then surely there had been a leap of joy
 In Egypt’s heart to welcome the fresh light
 Burst on her with the mighty miracles
 She saw wrought by Jehovah at the hand
 Of Moses, judgments on her creature gods.

“ Moreover, it would seem, from all I gleaned
 In scanty glimpses grudged me by our priests
 And by our wise men versed in antique lore,
 It so would seem that in her earliest times,
 Times of a well-nigh immemorial past,

Egypt was nearer seeing God aright,
As one, as only, living, personal,
Supreme and holy — nearer than are now
The wisest of her wise hierophants."

"So, then," said Mahlah, "there has been decline,
As in the wisdom of the world, so too
In knowledge of the truth concerning God —
In both these things alike — and equally
Perhaps? — decline, with Egypt, through the time
For which we know, or guess, her history.
Whereto tends this, thinkest thou, unless to show
That Egypt never of herself achieved
Her knowledge, whatsoever that has been,
Of the true God through long and slow degrees
Of struggle upward out of ignorance,
Out of gross brute besottedness in sense.
Seems that the proper motion of thy race —
I mean the motion that is natural,
Spontaneous, instinctive — downward is,
Not upward. So, as we have just now seen,
It is with Israel — worse apostasy
For Israel than for Egypt, Israel's sin
Being against such grace from God to her!"

With a relief he was ashamed to feel
For his hurt pride of race found in the thought
That Egypt might not be at fault herein
Beyond the general blame of all mankind,
Pharimoh said — and he unconsciously
Drew on a fund of thought repositied
Safe in the faithful folds of memory,
There latent and unrecognized by him
Yet ready to be rendered up at need,
Thought fallen from Moses in that first discourse
At large which at the time elusive seemed
To him, and which he did not know that now
He was remembering — assisted thus,
Pharimoh said: “ Perhaps then Egypt’s sin,
As Israel’s too, is but their several share
In the whole human world’s apostasy
From God. Is it indeed apostasy?
I fear so. Yet it were some salve to pride,
If we could justly bring ourselves to think
That we had climbed up by our native strength,
Buoyed with an inward aspiration high,
From some abject beginning like the brutes,
To what we now are, different so far.
Alas, that cannot be. For, if indeed

We from the lowest made an upward start,
Then from the less low, gained thus, we had moved,
By the same impulse strengthened now, again
And evermore toward higher levels; we
At least should never have fallen back — no room,
In such a supposition for the course
Of human history, no room for thought
Of lapse like Egypt's and return toward lower,
Persisting without stay a thousand years."

“ But how saidst thou the pyramid itself,
The great one reared by Cheops, was a proof
Of Egypt's having suffered such a lapse? ”
So Mahlah asked, and Pharimoh replied :
“ As part of the instruction of my youth,
I one day visited that pyramid,
And had the erring notion that I shared
With many, I suppose indeed with most,
Corrected, as to how it grew so great.
It was not because Cheops lived so long,
And, year by year, through his protracted reign,
Broadening the base all round and adding height,
Greater and greater built it till he died.
I saw it under conduct of a priest

Deputed to show me the mysteries
In the deep penetralia of it hid,
And he it was that set me right herein.

“ Bold with my youth, I yet was touched with awe
In winding inward through sunk sunless ways
Into the dark interior of the gloom
And silence of that mighty sepulchre.
Yet visitor more curious than devout
Was I, and when I reached the innermost
Stone chamber of perpetual repose
(For whose secluding the vast pile was reared)
Where lay — with such a house hung over him,
Sole tenant he of the safe silence there
From the hushed noises of the living world! —
The dead king of a thousand years before —
When to that last retirement I was come,
I looked about me with inquiring eyes
Not daunted not to see what was to see.
So looking, I thus wondered to the priest:
‘ The walls are bare, inscriptions none appear,
And no presentments such as those we saw
In the interiors of the pyramids,
Less but colossal, at Sakkara built,

Of various household furnitures engraved.
But most I marvel not to see at least
Pictures or sculptures of our many gods
Inscribed upon these walls. And wherefore none?'
I asked. He did not fairly answer me,
At first, but said: 'Our many gods, or most
Of them, we have found out since then.' I thought
He spoke with a degree of bitterness.
'There was Osiris, yea, and Horus, then,
And Apis, Serapis, and gods enough,
With all of them, but no such multitude
As we have now. But look thou round,' he said,
Veering as from a theme which did not please.
'Consider the magnificent design
With which this work was planned. No patchwork
here
Of makeshift afterthoughts. This pyramid
Was not built piecemeal, as the vulgar talk,
And with no plan save to heap stones on stones;
The structure was projected all at once
In the conception of the architect.
These chambers, with their polished porphyry walls,
The entrances to them, so intricate —
The master builder had them in his mind

Imagined, had this whole majestic pile,
Pointing to the four quarters of the world
With its four corners sloping to the sky,
Imagined in its present magnitude,
Before one stone was from the quarry cut,
To build it as thou seest it built, to stand,
A challenge to eternity itself,
As stable as the everlasting hills.
More than a whole millennium ago!
And only feeble copies of it since!

“ He looked admiringly above, around,
And added: ‘ Ah, but they knew how to do
Their work in those days! How degenerate we!’
And he went on to laud the mighty past,
And to lament the sad decay of art
Seen in our days. He was not an old man;
If he had been, I might perhaps have thought,
‘ The infirmity of age to praise the past,
Is now upon thee’ — though it is the past
Of their own youth, and not the past long-gone
Of centuries before, that old men praise;
He was still young, this priest. Full well I knew
I did not know enough about the things

He talked of to take part with him therein,
Whether to share his feeling, or demur.
So I said nothing in reply, but asked :
' The figures and presentments that we saw
In those less pyramids which thou wilt have
To be but copies of the great one here,
Had they some meaning beyond ornament ?'
' Yea, they are types,' he said, ' they mean such things
As in their future life the dead will need ;
They speak his faith that he will live again.'

" I felt a tone of skepticism, of sneer
Almost, in the priest's voice, as he thus spoke.
I think my father never held quite fast
To all the tenets of the common cult,
And he perhaps was willing that his son
Should fall into the hands of such a guide,
A man somewhat likeminded with himself.
With a considering look at me, as who
Pondered how freely he should speak, he said :
' Some say that Cheops was an atheist,
Or impious, hence would have his sepulchre
Naked of all acknowledgment of gods ;
I know not, but if so, then haply too

He thought it childish to inscribe his walls
With pictures of the household ware he used.
Or it may be the architect himself
So ruled it, as in better consonance
With the severe and nobly simple taste
In which his whole magnificence he reared.
At any rate, here is this pyramid
A mute but mighty monumental proof
That Egypt in old days was capable
Of things beyond her weakened reach to-day.
And I have answered thus the quest that slept
Within thee, unawakened to come forth
In utterance from thy lips, wherefore it is
That the great pyramid is uninscribed
Within, while those less later pyramids,
Seen at Sakkara, have such things to show.'

“ The seeming-skeptic tone in which he spoke,
A spirit in his words beyond his words,
It may have been, that set me on to think
My thought of misbecoming levity.
For, musing on those pictures in the tombs
Of dead kings at Sakkara, I thought this:
'Immortal by embalmment, — only so

Immortal, it may well be, — did they not,
The royal tenants of those sepulchres,
Have there, and then, and thus, their future life?
Sad fallacy of immortality
Indeed it were, those monarchs so enjoyed —
A futile future life in flesh prolonged,
Poor desiccated travesty of flesh,
Appropriately served by images
Of things, rather than by the things themselves! ”

“ A strange wild whim of youthful fancy thine! ”
Said Mahlah, “ but tell more of how it was
The pyramid itself its witness bore
To the decline of Egypt since its day.
Or is there nothing more to tell? ” “ O, yea,”
Pharimoh said. “ As we retraced our steps,
My guide permitted me a little more
Than he had done in entering to remark
The cunning of the stone artificers
Who had wrought out our path. At intervals
Portcullises of granite blocked our way.
These, with some key he bore well hid from me,
The priest, with a light little touch, scarce more
Than such a pulse of pressure as a babe

Might have applied not knowing it, swung round
Upon the smoothly-fitted pivots there,
And so made way for us to pass. These huge
Hewn stones had been so exquisitely poised
And balanced by the centre, that they turned
As of themselves ; or, haply some support
Was under them, with rounded balls that rolled
In grooves sunk in the masonry, below,
Above, grooves nicely fitted each to each,
The balls thus bearing the revolving stones
As if they only on their axes turned.
However it was, the priest bade me admire
The perfect adaptation, part to part,
Of all the massive workmanship I saw ;
The stones so laid together course on course
That scarce a show of juncture could be seen.
'Almost, it looks as if the structure grew,'
He cried ; 'as if it was not built, but grew.
There are no builders now like those of old,'
He added, and as if it cost him pain.

"But, Mahlah," with self-recollection so
Pharimoh, and self-rallying, challenged her,
"Couldst thou upon the instant tell me how

We have been hither brought upon our way
In talk? But I can tell thee, for my aim
Is never for one moment from my thought.
We were considering how propense toward wrong,
The sad wrong of apostasy from God,
Israel, and Egypt too, had proved themselves —
This at the first by way of finding light
Shed on the chances of success for me,
If I should undertake my task conceived.
Well, not much favorable light we found
Thence shed — this I must needs admit. And now
No fear that I shall lose sight of my aim,
If I permit myself to be led on
To ask a deeper, darker question yet
Than any we have talked of hitherto.
Mahlah, is the whole human race at once,
Like Egypt and like Israel, averse
From God? Why is it, and when did it start?
Oh, if we might but, as I said before
Concerning Egypt, if we might but think
That humankind began well-nigh as brutes,
And struggled upward from that low estate,
By their own innate strength unaided, till
They found out God! But having found him thus

Would they, or could they, then so fatuous fain
Be to let slip from them what they had found —
This noblest gain of knowledge possible?
There is a mystery here I cannot solve;
And would God let a creature of his hand
Capable, by the very fact of being
What God made him to be, of knowing God
At cost of struggle generations long
Out of dense darkness toward a light not seen,
Light as it were but chanced upon at last —
Would God a creature so endowed by him
With instinct of endeavor toward himself,
Would he, can we imagine that he would,
Start him a creature wallowing in the mire?
Nay, Mahlah, nay, man never found out God,
He was not so created that he could;
He only was created capable
Of knowing God, should God reveal himself —
But how then capable, alas, likewise
Of choosing not to know him when revealed?
Mystery, mystery! And without end!”

Pharimoh paused in his soliloquy —
For this even more than converse it had been —

And lost himself a while in silent thought,
Which Mahlah would not interrupt with words.
At length, as if emerging from a swoon,
An ecstasy, of absentness, he said:
“ How did man start on earth? And how become
The paradox he is of good and ill,
Of high capacity and instinct low?
Is he a ruin of what once was fair?
And is there reparation possible?”
He wrestled with it, but he did not solve
The eternal problem of the universe,
The origin of evil, and the cause.
He paused again, then added wearily:
“ Would I might talk with Moses of these things!
I did once hear him speak of these things, yea,
But hearing heard not, being unprepared.
Would I might talk with Moses of my plan!
My plan! Strange seems it even to my own self
I hold to it so firmly, though I find
Of favorable view to make me firm
Little or none. And thou not helping me —
With confidence in me, O faithful, yea,
But not with confidence in my success!”
A light of wistful humor crossed his face.

“ This is to be considered, Pharimoh :
Were there more ground of hope, by so much less,”
Said Mahlah, “ needed were what thou wouldst do.
The hopelessness, and thence the needfulness,
Of the attempt, is what allures thee so
Perhaps to make it — that were like thyself.”

“ Thou art most kind,” said Pharimoh, “ most kind,
But still discouraging. However, I
Must put my purpose to experiment ;
I feel the straitness of necessity.”

Fast in a helpless fixity of will,
Unreasoned, and ungrounded, fast the more,
Pharimoh moved a purpose-ridden soul.

BOOK X.

CANAAN.

A BROTHER-IN-LAW of Moses visits the camp. He witnesses a visitation of fire from heaven in punishment of yet another sin of rebellion on the part of Israel. Korah attributes the conflagration to accident, and to a coincidence of wind. Moses is overborne by the frowardness of the people, and makes complaining appeal to Jehovah, who answers with proposal of what in effect proves a searching test of character in Moses. Jehovah in judgment grants the people what, with morbid appetite, they lust for, by sending to them a second flight of quails followed by a destructive plague. Miriam and Aaron openly exhibit, to Moses' face, their jealousy of him, and Jehovah vindicates his servant, with judgment especially directed against Miriam. Korah makes this a matter of complaint and accusation against Moses. Explorers are despatched by Moses to Canaan, with whom by permission of Joshua, one of the exploring band, Pharimoh goes. Their experience is related.

CANAAN.

Moses had not, by that pathetic psalm
Of melancholy musing and of plea
For pity to the Everlasting God —
Had not so eased his heavy-laden heart
But that he needed human comfort too
And stay; and this God had provided him.
Hobab, the son of Moses' father-in-law,
Had come from Midian, by his wonder drawn,
Desirous to behold with his own eyes
What Jethro had reported of to him,
The marvels through his brother Moses wrought.
Moses was glad of him as guest, and fain
Would keep him for companion of the way.
When Hobab said, replying, "I will go
Back to mine own land and my kindred there,"
Moses besought him: "Nay, but bide with us;
Thou knowest well this wilderness, and thou
Shalt be to us as eyes to choose our way;
And whatsoever good Jehovah shall
Do unto us — and he hath promised large —

The same shalt thou share with us, all in all.”
As brother pleading with a brother, so
Moses with Hobab pleaded and prevailed.

But Hobab soon a frightful judgment saw
Wreaked from above on froward Israel.
Now it was so that every morning when
They set out for their forward pilgrimage,
Moses, in solemn invocation, said,
“ Rise, O Jehovah, rise, and let thy foes
Be scattered ! ” — every evening when their camp
They pitched, “ Return thou, O Jehovah,” said,
“ To the ten thousands of thine Israel ! ”
And Israel heard and heeded not, but sinned.
For, after three days’ journey from the mount,
Israel became, so soon again became !
A camp of ingrate murmurers against God.
Then on a sudden a devouring fire
Burned from incensed Jehovah through the camp
And swept them by the thousand to their doom.
‘ Thou carriest them away as with a flood ! ’
Mourned Moses, reminiscent of his psalm ;
‘ But the flood this time is a flood of fire ! ’
The people cried to Moses in dismay,

And Moses cried to God : “ Stay thou these flames
That they devour no more ! ” And they were stayed.

That wasting visitation from on high
Of fire that burned a wide way through the camp,
To Korah and to his confederates
Was but an accident from carelessness
Made serious by coincidence of wind ;
No wholesome saving awe to them it brought.
And when, soon after, through the host again
Murmurs against Jehovah rose, and moans
Of longing for the fresh things of the fields
And gardens — leeks and onions, cucumbers
And melons — and the fish too of the Nile,
Remembered well so plenteous at command
In Egypt — with sick loathing and disgust
Of manna, naught but manna, for their food,
Korah at this greeted his hope once more
As nearer now to hand, and watched his chance.

But Moses, the meek man, the strong, the brave,
For once was overborne. He cried to God :
“ Why hast thou thus dealt with me ? What am I,
That thou the burden of this people all

Shouldst lay on me? How are they mine to bear?
Did I conceive them? Did I bring them forth?
That unto me of all men thou shouldst say,
'Carry them in thy bosom!' — as were I
A nursing-father, suckling infant they,
Shouldst say, 'Carry them thither to the land
I swear unto their fathers should be theirs!'
And whence should I have flesh for portioning out
To all this people? For they weep to me
And say, 'Behold, thou, give us flesh to eat!'
I cannot bear this burden all alone,
It is too heavy for me. If thou thus
Deal with me, slay me out of hand, I pray,
If I so far find favor in thy sight,
And let me not behold my misery."

Jehovah knew the secret of the frame
Of Moses, he remembered he was dust,
And pitied him. He therefore did not chide
His servant that he thus was querulous;
Instead he with a soothing wisdom spoke —
Soothing, yet of a penetrative power
To put the temper of the man to proof.
Moses should from the host choose seventy men

And God would of that selfsame spirit take,
Before to Moses in distinction given,
And give it now to these along with him,
And they should help him bear what he had borne
Thus far alone. Now so it fell that two
Of the selected seventy went not forth,
As summoned, to the Tent of Meeting, there
To be invested with that gift from God ;
Yet these, still in the camp, no less received
The gift and prophesied ; whereon one ran —
It was young Eri, in his loyalty —
Doubting, to Moses and reported this.
Joshua, standing next to Moses, spoke,
Not doubting he but with decision swift,
And said, “ Forbid them, my lord Moses, thou ! ”

His zeal was such as that of those who once
Found one that cast out demons in the name
Of their Lord and forbade him, for that he
Followed not in their company. But, “ Nay,
Forbid him not ! ” the Meek and Lowly said.
So Moses now as if reluctantly,
Yea, almost rather as if praising him
For his devotion to his leader's part,

Tenderly chid his faithful minister :
“ Art thou then jealous for my sake? I would
That all Jehovah’s people prophets were,
That even upon them all Jehovah might
His spirit put!” The magnanimity
Of Moses, the true meekness of the man,
His childlikeness, his single-mindedness
(The demon of ambition exorcised),
Put to last proof had not been wanting found —
Yet was not Moses perfect before God!

And now to gorge those impious appetites,
Inflamed to uncontrollable excess
By gluttony and drunkenness and lust
In the mad orgies of idolatry
Before the image of the calf in gold —
To gorge now those libidinous appetites
With flesh to surfeiting, God blew a wind
From seaward to the camp and laded it
Heavier than it could bear with quails. These flew,
Exhausted with long flight above the sea,
Wearily low along the earth, and sank
Helpless within the clutch of greedy hands,
And more in multitude than there were hands

To gather, till they cumbered deep the ground
Within the camp and round about the camp
On every side in circuit many a mile.
The encampment was dissolved in groups of those
Who gathered not alone for present use,
But to store up, in that dry climate pure
Self-cured, for the supply of future need.
But God had granted them their hearts' desire
In judgment, not in mercy; and a plague
From him smote them for vengeance on their lust.

The woe most keen, most intimate, is that
Which pierces to the quick when a man's foes
Are they of his own household, kindred blood,
Not strangers. This most exquisite of woes
Moses was now to feel; for Miriam
And Aaron, what their father sadly said
Foreboding once to Moses, would fulfil.
But Amram his dismissal had received
Before; for, full of years and honor, he,
With Jochebed his wife the selfsame day,
Had gently fallen on sleep at Rephidim;
So Amram did not see those children's shame,
Who made their voices one speaking against

Their brother for his Cushite choice of wife,
And openly, what secretly before
They had to one another murmured, asked :
“ Indeed then has Jehovah but to him,
To Moses, spoken ? Has he not also to us ? ”

Moses had not to vindicate himself,
The meekest of all men on earth had not,
As if with pride invidiously, to claim,
Against his envious kindred's claim, his own
Unshared exclusive privilege from God ;
Jehovah intervened to speak for him.
It was with startling suddenness he spoke.
He called to Moses and to Miriam
With Aaron, “ Come ye forth, ye three alone,
And at the Tent of Meeting meet ye me.”
Jehovah in a pillar of cloud had come
And at the Tent of Meeting in the door
Stood, and to Aaron and to Miriam
Called, “ Draw ye nigh, ye two ; ” and they drew nigh,
When thus he spoke : “ In vision or in dream,
If prophet there may be among you, I,
Jehovah, will reveal myself to him.
But Moses is a man apart from all ;

He has in all my house been faithful found,
And I even mouth to mouth with him will speak
And he Jehovah's form shall see. Why, then,
Against my servant, against Moses, why,
Did ye not fear to let your voice be heard? "

But words in stern rebuke were not enough ;
Jehovah wroth forsook the Tent and lo,
Miriam, the mirror of all stateliness
In woman, was a leper white as snow !
Aaron beholding was appalled ; he cried :
" Oh, my lord Moses, we have sinned, have sinned,
Yet let her not, I pray, be as one dead,
As one whose flesh is half consumed from birth."
And to Jehovah, out of brother's ruth,
" Lo, heal her, I beseech thee ! " Moses cried.
Yea, Miriam should be healed, but she meantime
Must from the camp seven days abide shut out.
So all the people knew of Miriam's shame,
Though what had at the Tent of Meeting passed
They knew not, idly wondering and in vain.

But Korah did not wonder ; he instead
Found fresh occasion in the incident

For stirring up unfriendly sentiment
Toward Moses, whom he blamed for a hard heart
Of harshness by a younger brother shown
To such a sister, reverend with age,
With office and with dignity, because,
Forsooth, she had, in sense of equal worth,
Dared front his pride with noble pride not less.
There was no warning could pierce Korah's mail
Of triple self-sufficiency complete.
His hour invoked of opportunity,
Hour waited for impatiently so long —
Of opportunity, of doom — was nigh !

It came when now the pilgrim host arrived
So near the borders of their promised land,
That, had they but been faithful to their God,
They might have entered in and been at rest ;
Blindly they chose instead an endless round
Of wasteful wandering in the wilderness
Until they perished suffering for their sin !
For now Jehovah unto Moses said :
“ Choose thou fit men to go and view the land
Of Canaan, the land sworn a gift from me
To Israel ; every man to be a prince

Among his tribe, for every tribe a man."
So Moses chose twelve men and sent them forth ;
And Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim
Was one — which made it seem to Pharimoh,
With his young appetite unsated still
For action and adventure, that he might
By special favor win the privilege
Of going on this mission with his friend.

“ Yea, thou shalt go,” said Joshua, “ if thou wilt ;
Yet shouldst thou stay, there might, while we are gone,
A moment come to Moses of relief
From instant public care, and interval
Of leisure, wherein thou thy wished access
Couldst win for opening to him all thy mind.
It is already many days ago
He bade me send thee to him ; that was when
I was with him descending from the mount —
To find all Israel prone before the calf
Of gold in worship. But since then till now,
So have events been crowding full the time
And overwhelming Moses with affairs,
I could not send thee to him as he said.
I had ventured but to say to him for thee

That thou hadst somewhat of grave consequence
Thou fain wouldst bring to him for his advice ;
And some imperfect hint of what it was
I added, that he might the better judge
Of how much moment it appeared to thee."

" I thank thee that thou hadst it in thy thought,"
So Pharimoh replied, " thus to make clear
My way to Moses ; and indeed I still
Would wish to counsel with him on my plan.
But now, as seems to me, there is at hand
A crisis in the fortunes of this host
Which, as at length it turns this way or that,
Is certain to decide my course for me.
If the exploring band now to go forth
Come back with a report of things observed
Which shall inspirit every fainting heart
And make the host of Israel one in will
And courage to move stoutly on the way
Jehovah sets before them, why, then, I
Shall feel no sense of duty laid on me
To offer leadership for a return
To Egypt — there will then be none to wish
A leadership for such return. But if,

Contrariwise, the explorers bring report
To fill the hearts of many with such dread
That they would welcome opportunity
Afforded to draw back and seek again
The land of Egypt, why, then, here am I,
Ready to undertake the arduous task
Of leading them; in hope by slow degrees
To mould them new, and even to make of them
A living and regenerating force
For Egypt, in her desolated plight,
Which, purging her of her idolatry,
May erect her into a noble state
Worthy to be the compeer and ally
Of Israel in witnessing for God,
Our God, among the nations of the earth."

Pharimoh loved again and yet again
To put his cherished thought in words; he seemed
To himself thus each time to give it more
A look of likelihood, of reason, more
Consistency, more body, more approach
To visible reality and fact.
He could not but of Moses speak; he said:
"And Moses surely would be glad, could he

Be rid thus of a froward element
In the great host he leads, which oftentimes
Has proved so vexing to his leadership.
Meantime I shall not need from Moses seek
Counsel wherein I may not undertake.
I will wait till the temper of the host
Declares itself when the explorers come
With their report of what the prospect is
In the land promised for their future home."

Joshua listened, but direct reply
Reserved, the while he in his secret mind
The courage more of Pharimoh admired
Than the discretion in his plan displayed ;
But, in avoidance of expression, he
Let fall a word to his companion which,
Whether or not ambiguously meant,
Might either one of two alternative
Interpretations bear — as backward glance
At Pharimoh's behavior in the fight
With Amalek ; this, or as indirect
Reflection on the wisdom of the plan
Just now propounded. " I can trust," he said,
" Thy readiness to dare ; but hast thou well

Considered that, in this exploring task
Of ours, discretion will be better worth
Than all alacrity in taking risk?
However, I am young too," added he,
Genially smiling upon Pharimoh,
"And it may be of use that I should feel
A need of being prudent for us both!"
But Pharimoh was far too deeply lost
In earnestness to take a playful sense
Of rallying, couched there such, in Joshua's words.

A touch of sadness could but qualify,
To both of them, albeit to Mahlah more,
The parting of the twain, when Pharimoh,
Buoyant with youth and with the hopes of youth,
Set out for his first absence from her side
To tempt adventure in a land unknown.

To Joshua and to Pharimoh, arrived
In prospect of the Promised Land, it was
Like birth into a new and different world,
The contrast between this and Egypt felt.
A land of hills and valleys now they saw,
Of gushing fountains and of flowing streams.

The hills were clothed with pasture to their top,
Where flocks of sheep and herds of cattle grazed ;
Or sometimes, up their terraced slopes, the tilth
By verdant stairways to the summit climbed ;
And on the terraces the mantling vine
Curled her green tendrils, and her clusters forth
Of fresh-ripe grapes laid, purpling to the sun.
Between the hills the fertile valleys waved
With billowing seas of lush luxuriant grass,
Or bearded barley and head-heavy wheat,
With breadths of brilliant bloom bespangled gay,
Or flecked with flowerets of a thousand hues.
Fig-trees, pomegranates, hoary olives, palms,
Lifted their leafage and their fruitage fair,
While orange-trees, hung thick with globes of gold,
Burst into blossom sweetening all the air ;
And nowhere land so rich in wilding flowers
To tempt the toil of honey-hiding bees,
Whose musical low murmur of content
Was pierced and thrilled with voices of the birds
Unnumbered heard from every rocking bough.
After that interval of wilderness
Since Egypt, and the darkly frowning brows
Of Sinai, what a paradise was here !

The senses all of those adventurers
Were feasted full with tremors of delight.

“ Yea, a delightsome land ! ” cried Pharimoh.
“ What with the cattle on a thousand hills,
And with such wealth of fragrance-laden flowers,
Land that indeed with milk and honey flows.”
To him the sentiment of beauty more
Was than to Joshua, who made reply
Befitting the responsible, intent
Man that he was, charged with a serious trust
To be fulfilled, the natural warrior too
Prescient of fight : “ Behooves that we observe
The peoples that inhabit here, their towns,
Their cities, builded how, how fortified,
What manner of men they are for size, for strength,
And even, if that may be, for practiced skill
In feats of arms, for courage and for craft :
For we must cope with them and overcome.”

Such answer made by Joshua gave a tinge
Of sombre to his young companion’s thought.
“ But if we take possession of this land,
We dispossess the people — do we not ? —

Who hold it now. Does this seem right?" demurred

Thoughtfully Pharimoh. Joshua said:

"Not only dispossess, but drive them out,
Or slay; utterly cleanse the land of them."

"Can this be right?" sadly asked Pharimoh,
Who, though he late by proof at Rephidim
Had shown himself full ready for the fray,
When need was to repel assault, recoiled
A little from the thought of waging war
Aggressively, of carrying sword and fire
Into a land of peaceful happy homes
Like lovely Canaan, as it looked to him.

"Can this be right?" he sadly asked; whereto
Joshua made answer: "Right, be sure, is this,
To obey Jehovah whatso he commands.
The earth is his to give to whom he will,
In portions as his wisdom sees most fit.
And, Canaan having given to Israel,
He now bids Israel come and take the land,
And purge it of its foul inhabitants."

"'Foul' is a bitter word," said Pharimoh;
"Wherein are Canaan's present people foul?"

"They practice all abominations, such

Abominations that to name them even,"
Said Joshua, "were unmeet; scarce couldst thou dream,
In wanton wicked fancy, aught so vile,
So loathsome, but these nations practice it.
The land, the very soil, is sick of them,
And longs with loathing qualms unspeakable
To vomit them from out its queasy gorge.
This is not mine, it is Jehovah's own
Expression of abhorrence for their sin.
And, strange to say, he his own Israel warns
Against becoming foul like these and so
Themselves like these being spued from out the land.
The cup of their iniquity is full,
And God makes ready now to execute
His long-suspended judgment on their guilt.
Israel must be a weapon in his hand,
Jehovah's hand, to drive these peoples forth.
Woe, woe to Israel, if his hand they fail!"

Joshua saying these things full ready seemed
To be himself a thunderbolt of God,
If God would have him such, a thunderbolt
With living indignation all aflame,
And fierce of his own motion to forsake

The right hand of the Thunderer ere released
And swoop with joyful fury on his aim.
The young man listening scarcely overcame
His awe, to ask his elder, as at length,
Recovering breath, he asked : " Might it not be
That these corrupted nations would be won
From following their ill ways, did they but know
Jehovah and his hatred of such sins ?
Why could not Israel save them, not destroy ? "
" But nay, oh, nay," said Joshua in reply —
And, while he added reasons, Pharimoh
Was busy in his mind with troubled thought
Concerning his great purpose, and with doubt
Unwelcome, scarcely entertained even now,
Whether the reasons Joshua gave might not
Have equal force against his hopes in that ;
" Nay, nay, but Israel is not saved herself.
Thine eyes have seen how dreadful is the strength
Her unregenerate heart has against God.
She would not save these nations ; they instead
Would destroy her, should she with them abide
To share this land in peace and amity.
Israel and they would fester in one mass
Putrescent, in one reeking rottenness ;

A second deluge then should wash the world!"

By virtue of his innate leadership
Joshua was captain of the exploring band.
"We will go two and two our several ways,
But aim to meet at certain intervals.
We must not draw attention to ourselves;
If any ask you whence and why you come,
Say, 'We are strangers out of Egypt come
To visit your good land whereof the fame
Has reached our ears far off. We are not here
For any purpose but to see and learn.'
To ask and not to answer questions will
At once our profit and our prudence be."
So Joshua counselled and so it was done.
Caleb with Joshua made one pair; but they
Let Pharimoh go with them for a third.

These three at one place in the land beheld
A spectacle which was to Pharimoh
More eloquent of Canaan's lost estate
Than had been Joshua's burst of burning words.
For Joshua, summoned by the magistrates
Of that place to give some account to them

Why he was there, had their suspicions laid
By many questions that betokened him
A curious traveller on a roving quest
Of knowledge touching divers nations' ways.
"Egypt has her peculiar gods," he said,
"And worships them in her peculiar ways ;
So is it doubtless with you here in Canaan ; we
Would gladly, if we might, learn of these things."
"To-morrow there will be a sacrifice
And service rendered to our nation's god,
Whom Moloch call," the complaisant reply
Was. "Come and see and ye shall learn how we
Seek to propitiate our divinity,
When danger threatens, and invoke his aid
To turn presaged calamity away."
Naught to such purport was expressly said,
But Joshua wondered, Means it Israel ?

It was a radiant morning of pure sky,
That morrow, not a cloud to fleck the blue,
And a bland lovely climate lapped the land
In a delicious atmosphere to breathe
Which was to feel that living was delight,
When, early rallying to the accustomed spot,

The people came to do their sacrifice.
They clustered round an image gross of brass
Which showed a calf's head, but had human hands
Outstretched as if in gesture to receive.
The brazen monster had a hollow huge
For belly, whence there issued fume and flame
Fouling the crystal pureness of the air ;
For all that hollow was a pit of fire.
Those three spectators watched with eyes intent
And saw parents with children in their arms
Draw nigh the image. Decked the children were,
As if for joyous festival, with gay
Attire, and garlanded with flowers. A priest
Stood ready to receive the little ones
From nestling safe upon the parents' breasts,
And give them to the god. With loud outcry
Of invocation and devotion, he
Glutted the greed, the horrid greed, expressed
By those brazen hands outstretched, placing in them
The little children, one by one, who thence
Slid quickly down into the pit of fire.
Besides the smoke and flame, a sickening smell
Polluted then the pure ambrosial air ;
But noise of drums beat drowned the children's cries,

Till Moloch had in full his feast enjoyed.

“ Such then are they whom the land vomits forth ! ”
Said Pharimoh ; and, “ Yea, ” said Joshua ;
“ Besides that these possessors of the land
Took their possession first by violence ;
They will but suffer in their turn themselves
What other nations suffered at their hands. ”

BOOK XI.
THE DOOM OF KORAH.

THE returning explorers make their report. Ten out of the twelve counsel discouragingly, and throw the host into a panic. The cry, supplied by Ehu and Ehi, arises, "Let us have Pharimoh, the Egyptian prince, for captain, and go back to Egypt!" Pharimoh, in conference at the moment with Korah in the latter's tent, is visited by the surging crowd. He is much moved by this demonstration, but under advice from Korah he sends the multitude away with a few words of thanks. Korah invites Pharimoh to accompany him, with his confederates, in a formal waiting upon Moses. Going, as invited, he is astounded by Korah's insolent demands, and he withdraws from that company and takes his station by Moses' side. Moses proposes to Korah and his fellows a test, to decide who is Jehovah's choice. On's wife entreats her husband not to go to that test. Korah goes, and his nerves are first tried by witnessing the punishment visited on Dathan and Abiram. After that, he himself with his confederates meets his doom. The effect on different spectators is described.

THE DOOM OF KORAH.

WITH the return of the exploring band,
Their forty days of exploration done,
The crisis came presaged by Pharimoh.
Of what they saw all made the same report ;
Of what they felt in seeing what they saw, .
And of the counsel that they thence would urge,
The reports made were twain and opposite.
Beautiful, yea, and bountiful the land ;
They of its bounty token brought and proof —
A cluster of ripe grapes from Eshcol, borne,
A single cluster, borne upon a staff
Which, pressed with its luxuriant lading, bent
Between the two who carried so the spoil.

But some said, nay, but all said, saving two :
“ The dwellers there are fierce and formidable,
Mighty in stature all, and there we saw
The sons of Anak and the Nephilim.
We in their sight were but as grasshoppers,
And in our own sight but as grasshoppers.

Their cities are immense and walled heaven-high.
We are not able to possess the land,
It would be simple madness, the attempt.
We should but give ourselves into the hands
Of the fell peoples there, to be devoured."

So all save two of the explorers spoke ;
But two of them far other counsel gave.
Caleb, for Joshua speaking, with himself,
Spoke boldly out and manfully ; he stilled
The people before Moses, murmuring
Already they, but easy to be quelled
By voice and gesture of a master man.
His words were like a purifying wind
That, having kissed a mountain's cheek of snow,
Blows hovering mist and miasm far away :
" Let us go up at once and take the land ;
We are well able to subdue it ours."

But the ten others spoke again and said :
" We are not strong enough for this attempt ;
The peoples there are stronger than are we."
And the whole congregation, hearing, cried
A lamentable cry of craven fear,

And all that night throughout a wakeful camp
The sound of weeping sobbed from every tent.
With daybreak on the morrow they cried out,
As with one voice the people all cried out :
“ Would we had in the land of Egypt died !
Would we had perished in this wilderness !
Why doth Jehovah thither bring us now
Only to fall there by the foeman’s sword ?
Our wives, they, and our little ones, will be
A helpless spoil and prey in cruel hands.
Were it not better done, if not too late,
To turn us round and back to Egypt go ?
To Egypt ! Yea, to Egypt ! Let us choose
Ourselves a captain and to Egypt go ! ”

The moment was a moment whereupon
That pilgrimage’s future seemed to hinge.
Moses and Aaron were together wrought
To passion ; they together prostrate fell
Upon their faces **before** all the host ;
While Joshua **and** Caleb rent their clothes
In **extreme** gesture of protest and pain,
Crying **out** to the people : “ A good land
It is we saw, a land exceeding good,

And if Jehovah take delight in us
He will deliver it into our hands,
A land that flush with milk and honey flows !
Only against Jehovah God rebel
Not, and not fear the people of the land !
Their shield and buckler of defence is gone,
And we, we have Jehovah, fear them not !”
The answer of the congregation was,
“ Stone them with stones !” But suddenly appeared
The glory of Jehovah in the Tent
Of Meeting, visible to all the host.

Ten was the number of the times that now
The house of Israel, that rebellious house,
Had tempted the Lord God with their perverse
Murmurings against his providence, and doubt
Of his fulfilment of his promises ;
The patience of his grace would bear no more.
He bade his servant Moses thus denounce
Against them his immutable decree
Of reprobation and of punishment :
“ Say thou to them, Hear what Jehovah saith :
These ten times I have heard your murmurings
Against me ; lo, according to your words,

Your own words, so it shall indeed befall
To you; for your dead bodies shall be strewn
Here in this wilderness, and not one soul
Among you that have murmured against me
Shall ever set foot in the promised land —
Caleb and Joshua only there shall come —
And as for those your little ones of whom
Ye murmured, They shall be a prey! them I
Will bring in safely to behold the land;
Yet forty years long shall they wander here
And suffer for your sins until ye die!”

In dreadful sanction of these dreadful words,
A plague from God those men destroyed, the ten
Whose froward counsel caused the murmurings.
When Israel heard from Moses' lips what God
Had said to him for them, they were distressed
Exceedingly; they had a paroxysm
Of false obedience on repentance false.
“We have sinned, have sinned,” they said, “and we
will go
Now to the place Jehovah promised us.”
In vain did Moses warn them they would so
Break the express commandment of the Lord;

They, in the teeth of that forbidding, moved,
Jehovah not with them, and suffered loss;
For Amalek and Canaan beat them down.

While all these things were passing, Pharimoh
Was tried, he even was tempted, beyond aught
That he before had known; and thus it fell.
Ehu and Ehi first and foremost were
Among the voices to cry out that day,
“Lo, let us choose ourselves a captain who
Shall to the land of Egypt lead us back.”
And when that word, thus made articulate
By those two brothers, grew the general cry,
The universal, the unanimous,
Then they spread far and wide throughout the host
Report that Pharimoh, the Egyptian prince,
Was ready for that task, that he in fact
But waited to be chosen by the host
And he would raise the standard of return.
“Let us at once assure him of our choice.
Up! To his tent! Crowd we around him there,
Or wheresoever else he may be found,
And loud acclaim him captain of our choice!”
Ehu and Ehi thus enticed the crowd

And led them, well-nigh the whole host, to where
They learned 'soon Pharimoh in council was
With Korah in that Hebrew prince's tent.

Korah had sent for Pharimoh to say
At last to him that now the time was ripe
For himself, Korah, and those many peers
Of whom long since he had told Pharimoh,
To go to Moses and present to him,
The leader of the host, their serious thought
Of what was needful for the common weal.
Pharimoh should go with them, if he would,
And thus, with the support that they could lend,
Command his wished-for audience with the chief,
Who would the readier be to yield assent
To his proposals, seen to be approved,
Or judged to be, by men of such renown
So many and so well-agreed in thought.
"Remember," Korah said, "thou hast not yet
Told me what thy proposals are to be
No matter, they are worthy of thyself,
And though thou mightst desire an audience
More private and more personal than this
With Moses for receiving his advice,

That opportunity, consider, thou
Mayst count upon with added certainty
After appearing in our leader's sight
Countenanced so by us, the chief and choice
Of Israel's noble blood; and thou meanwhile
Mayst by the proof of thine own ear and eye
Learn what the temper is of those who hold
High councillors' places in this pilgrim host."

It was while Pharimoh was thus engaged
With Korah in that haughty chieftain's tent,
That the great throng of common Israelites
Came surging thither with the roaring sound
Of multitudinous outcry, "Pharimoh!
Hail, Pharimoh! The captain of our choice!
Long live the prince, illustrious Pharimoh!"
The young man's heart, how could it otherwise?
Exulted in his breast with a great bound.
The tell-tale pleased blood flushed to his cheek,
And, with involuntary movement, he
Started as if to rise upon his feet.
His impulse, half unconscious, was at once
To show himself at the tent-door, and there
By word or sign somehow make known at least

His grateful pleasure to hear such acclaim.
Something in Korah's unmoved air repressed
This impulse, and, half shamed, he felt the eye
Of that astute observer read his thoughts.
He settled back into his seat, and so,
Like a child lessoned, heard while Korah said,
Contemptuously regardless of the shouts
Outside that shook the young man's senses still :
" Keep thou thy seat, young man, and let that mob
Bark themselves hoarse with bawling of thy name.
Listen to me. Those idle, addle hearts —
Throats rather were perhaps the better word,
Surely not minds, such people have no minds —
They know not what they want, much less know they
What they most need. To-day is this caprice,
To-morrow other, each day its own caprice.
Give thou thyself not up to them for theirs ;
Be master and not servant of the crowd.
Yet, if thou wilt " — just then a great access
Of uproar shook the tent-ropes of the tent,
And seemed to threaten instant violence —
" Yet, if thou wilt, and that this hideous noise
Of theirs be stayed, go out and wheedle them,
In few words best, as downward to them spoken,

Perhaps some easy-going words like these:
'I thank you for your confidence reposed
In me, and I will ponder well my way,
Giving due heed to your expressed desires.
In sign you would accept my leadership,
Cease shouting now and quietly disperse,
Retiring to your several tents in peace.'

Not without keen discomfort to be schooled
Like this, yet dominated helplessly
By Korah's calm ascendant over him,
And withal swiftly brought himself to think
There really was perhaps for present use
No better wisdom possible to him,
Pharimoh acted on the counsel given.
At the first sight of him — a form and face
Well fitting for the idol of a crowd —
The people, with no pause to hear his voice,
Assuming that they had their will of him,
Redoubled their vociferous acclaim,
And for some moments, while he speechless stood,
Roared round him like the ocean in a storm.
At length he, with a beckoning hand stretched forth,
Induced a lull in the tempestuous noise,

And, with recovered native dignity,
Composedly thanked them for such a proof
Of their prized confidence in him — which he
Would on his part endeavor to deserve —
And, promising to ponder well his course,
Begged them, according as they did indeed
Desire his leadership, to cease their cries,
And, peaceably dispersing, seek their tents.
The people, with a murmurous undertone
Of inarticulate response, retired.
They were but half pleased at such test proposed
Of their obedience to their choice of chief.

“Thou hast well done,” Korah to Pharimoh,
Returned now to the inside of the tent
To wait there till the people should disperse —
“Thou hast well done,” said he, “to temporize
Thus with the empty-headed crowd, the while
They cool in this enthusiasm and shift
Their whim to some thing or to some one else.
May chance a remnant of them will remain
Of mind to have thee for their captain yet
For the return to Egypt; wait and see.
Meantime, come thou with us now presently —

Give me the pleasure of thy company,
And we will start together, thou and I —
Exactly when, expect thou word from me —
To wait on Moses with our homages.”

Dashed and depressed from such an interview
With Korah, Pharimoh to his own tent
Repaired. Should he in Mahlah solace find,
The solace of support to his desire?

It never had been Korah's wish or thought
Really to further Pharimoh's designs.
He did not wish the host of Israel
Disrupted by secession of a part.
What he did wish was to humiliate
Moses before all eyes and to usurp
Equality of headship with his head.
Knowing how Moses loved young Pharimoh,
He thought that, could he bring him with himself,
As if in concert and complicity
With his conspired confederates in plot,
When in a formidable body they
Should come in before Moses to demand
His abdication of exclusive claim

To be the hand and oracle of God —
Korah thought this would exquisitely pain
Moses, and far subdue him to their will.
He an unbounded confidence indulged
That the ascendant over Pharimoh
He wielded, reinforced as it would be
By the imposing show of numbers such
And of such quality arrayed in league
Together with himself, would overcome
Whatever impulse in the prince's breast
Might prompt him at the pinch to break away
In protestation of dissent from them.
Korah had rated his own power too high,
Too low the faith and mettle of the prince.

With some revival of enthusiasm,
As he recalled the popular acclaim
Which at its moment had so stirred his blood,
Pharimoh told the story of the morn
To Mahlah — who indeed the bruit had heard,
As no one in the camp could fail to hear,
But the bruit only, not the certain sense,
Of the wild movement that had just occurred ;
Less, the part in it Pharimoh had played.

He now asked her, almost with triumph asked :
“ Is it to count for nothing, such a sign ?
For nothing, this compelling sense I feel
Of duty and of opportunity ?
May not these mean, concurring as they do,
May they not mean a call from God to me ? ”
“ Oh, Pharimoh,” said Mahlah, “ hadst thou had,
Like Moses, some assurance visible
And audible vouchsafed thee of God’s choice !
And had there been vouchsafed thee by God’s grace,
As there to Moses was, some outward sign
Which thou couldst show to others to attest
Thy call from him ! And had God furthermore
Pledged thee in solemn promise his support !
Without his promise wilt thou dare attempt ? ”
“ But if without his promise made express,”
Said Pharimoh, “ I trust him, shall I not
Thereby please him more perfectly, deserve
More largely from him, lay him as it were
Under an obligation to support
One who thus ventured for him unassured ? ”
“ Yea, be the venture such as he would wish,”
Said Mahlah, “ venture in the line direct
Of what he has disclosed to be his will.

But did he not disclose it as his will
That Israel should go in pilgrimage
Forward to Canaan, to their promised land?
And if some disobedient would instead
Go back to Egypt, can it be God's will
That they should, in their disobedience, go
And prosper? And such disobedient,
Would they obey thee who obeyed not God?
Oh, Pharimoh! Oh, Pharimoh!" she said,
"I disappoint thee, speaking thus, I know,
But" —

"Mahlah, oh, my Mahlah!" Pharimoh
Said, interrupting her, "thou, like thyself,
Hast spoken from thy heart; wise little heart!"
He added, under protest, half ashamed;
The touch of condescension saved his pride,
A little, his man's pride — not noble, nay,
But natural — in giving way so far
To what he could not stand against — "and I —
I have not at the moment wherewithal
To answer thee thy reasons; be content,
Soon, perhaps even to-morrow, I am to go
With certain of the princes of the host

To audience with Moses, and there may
Then something not to have been expected fall
Which will abruptly fix my course for me,
And, who can tell? it may be to thy mind."
Was it unconscious presage on his part?
Or did there come fulfilment as by chance?
Not to have been expected was indeed
That which befell and saved the generous youth,
Or gave the generous youth his happy chance
To save himself, by such a quick rebound
In him of native nobleness as showed
In all men's eyes of what stuff he was made.

That morrow Korah sent a messenger
To Moses and in peremptory phrase
Advised him of his purpose to appear
With certain of the princes of the host —
For number not to be despised, and rank —
Before their leader and submit to him
Suggestions bearing on his leadership.
"The earliest thou wilt signify," he said,
"Thy pleasure to receive us, we will come."
"At once come ye!" was Moses' prompt reply.
So in procession and array to move

As formidable-seeming as might be,
Observed of all the congregation, those
Two hundred and twoscore and ten, the choice
Of Israel's princes of renown, they came,
Korah the head, worthy to be the head.

Aaron was standing at his brother's side,
And Korah, boldly loud, addressed them both ;
He made his voice loud to support himself
In what, for all his stout audacity,
He felt to be a hazardous assay.
Ere Korah spoke, Moses, divine of ill
From such a demonstration, wondering saw
Pharimoh nigh to Korah in the ranks
And felt a pang of anguish pierce his heart.
"Ye two," said Korah, making his first blow
A blow to stagger, "grow insufferable ;
Far, far too much ye take upon yourselves,
As ye were all, and nothing, we the rest.
Not so is this ; the congregation all
Are holy to Jehovah, every one,
And in the midst of them Jehovah is.
Why is it ye usurp authority
And lift yourselves on high above the host ?

. This is to say, we will not suffer it.
Look on us here, princes of Israel all,
Who do a duty by the host we serve,
To tell you plainly this must have an end.”
The look and gesture of the man denounced
More than his words, than any words, could do,
The purpose of rebellion in his heart.

Pharimoh listened with astonishment
And indignation uncontrollable ;
And shame his indignation fiercer made.
Feeling his youth and inexperience,
In face of that majestic presence meek
Outraged, feeling his own position false,
And conscious how unfit it were in him
To take aught of that moment fraught with fate
For seeking to explain why he was there,
Yet he compulsion irresistible
Felt too upon him laid to speak at once.
Or ever Moses uttered word, he spoke :
“ I separate myself from these men here ;
With other purpose far than theirs, I came.
Their purpose I abhor, and, in the teeth
Of their disloyalty, I pledge anew

My faith and fealty faster than before
To our reveréd leader and beloved,
By whose side now, if he will suffer it,
Behold, for life or death, I take my stand.”
Wherewith, at sign of grace in Moses seen —
It was a sign of gladness nigh on tears —
Forth from amid those proud conspirators
Pharimoh moved ; but, as he moved, he turned
An aspect backward, fulgorant with scorn
And with repudiation, on those false,
Keenest and steadiest upon Korah bent ;
Then, after such farewell of them, he fixed
On Moses an ineffable regard
Of loyal young affection reverent,
And took his station at his leader's side.
Moses, with right arm thrown about the youth
Betokening welcome of him as a son
With full forgiveness of whatever fault
May have been his, for one brief moment stood,
Beheld of all in that paternal act
Of gentleness, lovelier in such as he,
Then, with a passionate gesture tragical,
He threw himself face downward to the ground.
There in an agony of prayer he lay

Until he knew from God what he must do.
Arising, he, with awe-inspiring calm,
Words purged of wrath, denunciation none,
To Korah and to all his company
Thus spoke: "Jehovah will to-morrow show,
To-morrow morning, who are his and whom
He will have near him come, whom he will choose.
Thou, Korah, and all ye his company,
Take censers and to-morrow morning come
With them before Jehovah; he shall show
Whom he will choose as holy. It is ye
That take too much upon yourselves, ye sons
Of Levi, who against Jehovah join
Yourselves together in this conspiracy."

Toward Dathan and Abiram of that league
Moses a yearning of compassion had.
He sent for them to come to him that he
Might words use of dissuasion and prevail
With them at least to break away betimes
From such ill fellowship; but they refused
To come, and words of wanton insolence,
Worse than were Korah's, sent him in reply,
Which angered Moses unendurably.

He to Jehovah made aggrieved appeal
Against them for their wanton insolence ;
A dread redress Jehovah granted him.

That morrow ere the dawning day could pierce
The darkness of the inner of their tent,
On's wife awaking to her husband said :
" I pray thee go not to that test this day,
I have had fearful dreams concerning it.
I thought mount Sinai at a word from him,
From Moses, hurtled hither high in air,
And hung above you, shadowing horribly —
Korah and all of you in league with him —
Just for a moment hung, then settled down
Upon you, oh, with such a noise, beyond
All noises ever heard by human ears,
And buried you forever out of sight.
You had no time more than to cry one cry
And stretch up useless hands as if in prayer,
And the great awful mountain on you sat —
More awful, belching forth mixed smoke and fire
From its burst entrails, than we ever saw
It, flaming underneath Jehovah's feet.
I pray thee, I beseech thee, go not thou

With those thy fellows to that fearful test.
Moses is a true man of God, and God
Will choose him over all of you, be sure,
And will reject you others terribly,
Who band yourselves together against him.

“ If only thou couldst go to them and say,
‘ Behold, I cannot and I will not stand
Longer to my conspiracy with you.
I fear to be found fighting against God.
Be ye entreated, all of you ; renounce
Your purpose ; else, if ye will not with me,
Then I alone will my withdrawal make
Before all men and beg to be forgiven
Of Moses, when we meet him face to face
This day ’ — oh, On, if thou but couldst thus do ! —
But if that be beyond thy strength, at least
Stay thou behind, and be not seen with them,
Lest thou with them be sudden overwhelmed ! ”

On was persuaded by his wife, and saved.
He was not equal to the nobler part
His wife proposed for him, and yet he did
Brace himself toward it in so far that he,

As day was breaking, went to Korah's tent,
And, finding Korah on the point to start
For that last tryst of his with Moses, said :
" I do not with thee thither go ; I fear
The issue ; Moses is a mighty man,
And my wife had a fearful dream this night ;
She thought " — " I cannot stay to hear her dream,"
Said Korah ; " all of us have dreams, all sorts,
And some of them come true, and more do not ;
Thy wife's is likely of the latter sort.
By just such weaknesses as these in us,
Moses has prospered hitherto. He thinks
That he can count upon them in us ever —
As now. This test of his is but a risk
He takes. He only means to frighten us,
And thee it seems he frightens — but not me.
Thou wilt be witness, but not sharer be,
Of the great triumph to be won this day.
And the whole congregation I shall have
Before the Tent of Meeting, at the door,
There to behold this man's discomfiture.
For I shall overtop him ; that is, show
Myself a little more assured than he.
He knows, as I know, that this day decides

For once, for all, whether he lords it still
Over us all, as he thus far has done.
In this assay, he will gird up his will
To dash me; I will meet him, frown for frown,
And all shall see which is it will be dashed.

“ Pity it is, O On, for thee, that thou
Thus choosest to forego for naught the share
Which might have been thine from this victory.
Jehovah will, doubt not, be found to side
With him whose heart he has the firmest made;
And my compeers, two hundred fifty souls —
Less one, by On’s defection at the last —
And the whole congregation too besides,
Ranged with me to support the claim I make.”
On feebly hinted, as from Korah’s side
Already on his way to keep the tryst
He parted and drew off, “ Remember thou,
O Korah, Pharaoh’s heart was very firm,
And he all Egypt’s power had at his back ! ”

Such Parthian arrow from bow laxly strung
Yet found a joint in Korah’s panoply;
And Korah went thence onward to the test

With a misgiving, which it tasked his strength
To hide, aflutter in his breast. His look
Was of resolve composed and confident ;
A fatal desperation was his state.

Standing with his two hundred fifty peers,
Korah must first brace himself strong to see
A dreadful retribution visited
On Dathan and Abiram of his league.
For Moses, by Jehovah's bidding, went
Toward these two men and warning cried aloud
To all the congregation serried round :
" Remove, I pray you, from the neighborhood
Of the tents where these wicked men abide,
Lest ye with them together be devoured."
So did the congregation, on all sides ;
But Dathan and Abiram, stupefied
With wonder and alarm, they, and their wives
And children, from their tents came out and stood
At their tent-doors, awaiting what would fall.
The meek man in his meekness was upborne
To an inspired sublimity of wrath,
As he stood forth, Jehovah's minister —
Jehovah, by him, well-nigh visible —

And, with white lips and thundering-Sinai brow,
Slowly denounced the doom condign prepared :
“ Behold, ye shall know now that I these works
Ye see me working, not of mine own mind
Do, but obedient to Jehovah’s word.
Look ye upon these men : if these men die
The common death allotted to all men,
Then I am proved not by Jehovah sent ;
But if Jehovah now make a new thing,
And the ground underneath them where they stand
Open its mouth to swallow them alive
And they still breathing down to Sheol go,
Then ye may understand it was not I,
Not Moses, but Jehovah they despised.”

Never a moment in the tide of time
Was heavier fraught with menace and with fate
Than the brief frightful moment of suspense
That followed after Moses said these things.
The heart of Korah even, amid his throng
Of princes in rebellion with him there,
Was moved out of its place within his breast ;
And he no longer thought of Moses now
As staking all upon the risks of chance.

Rigid as if transfixed from head to foot,
Watching with eyes that saw all in a blur,
He stood and saw the monstrous hungry earth
Open its jaws agape, with threatening noise,
Under the spot where those devoted tents
Were pitched, inevitably open wide,
Wider and ever wider opening them,
In chasm that deepened into darkness down,
The sevenfold darkness of the underworld,
And horribly engorge those wretched men,
Despisers of Jehovah by their sin.
A cry went upward from that yawning pit
Laden so with such horror of despair
That all the people, hearing it, drew back,
Lest the earth open also under them
And they sink living into the abyss.
Then slowly those wide-gaping jaws were closed —
A spectacle more dreadful to behold
Than was their opening with that rending sound —
And there, where stood the tents so swallowed up,
Naught but a gap of emptiness aghast!

Korah had little leisure to repent
The rashness and the hardness of his pride —

If his pride, pampered long, and long a sign
Conspicuous to be seen by all the host,
Had left repentance possible to him.
Scarce was the ground made whole again and bare,
When from Jehovah there burst forth a fire
Upon them which so utterly consumed
Korah and his confederates in plot,
That these, who perished in the open air,
Were nowhere even in vestige to be seen,
More than were those deep hidden underground;
The place that knew them knew them now no more!

On shuddered, as he hugged himself with joy
That he was not of those who perished so.

Ehu and Ehi, when they saw the doom
Which Dathan and Abiram overtook,
Shrugged them their shoulders, and no otherwise
Gave sign of any feeling that was theirs;
And when the swift sword of that fire from God
Lighted on Korah and his company,
They, with white faces, blanched by deadly fear,
Blessed themselves sordidly that their own blood
Was not of censer-bearing Levite strain,

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And not of princely ; but when morrow came,
And that plague from Jehovah swept the camp,
Those twain did not escape deservéd scath ;
They with the undistinguished thousands died.

All these things Pharimoh beheld with awe,
Which, chastening his ambition and his pride,
Made him thenceforward wisely well content
Meekly to be led rather than to lead.

BOOK XII.
THE FAREWELL OF MOSES.

YET another outbreak of rebellion on the part of Israel brings on yet another punishment from Jehovah. Aaron's choice by God is attested by a beautiful wonder wrought in his favor. But Moses, through the sentence of Jehovah against his people, finds himself face to face with the prospect of forty years' wandering with them in the wilderness. Troublous years they are to him, but he finds intervals of comparative leisure in which to write the story of the world from its beginning in creation by the word of God. Pharimoh acts as amanuensis in preparing these records. Miriam dies at Kadesh and is buried there. Aaron dies on mount Hor. It is announced by Jehovah to Moses that he too must die without setting foot in the Promised Land. In the time intervening before his death, he dictates to Pharimoh his farewell address. On the appointed day, he goes alone into the mountain appointed, and there dies. Jehovah buries him, but exactly where, no man knows.

THE FAREWELL OF MOSES.

THE choice by God of Moses for his task
Was less a call to glorious privilege
Than to a lot of lifelong martyrdom.
That ingrate people, hopelessly perverse,
Close upon vindications such from God
Of his chosen minister, rebelled again ;
Nay, but those very vindications even,
By wrath and judgment from Jehovah's hand,
They made occasion of complaint and blame
Against those servants of the Most High God
Whom as his choice he had attested thus :
“ Ye have killed the people of Jehovah, ye,”
To Moses and to Aaron both as one
They cried — in blasphemy attributing
The dread acts of Jehovah so to men.

Sudden, in sight of the rebellious host,
Flamed the portending glory of the Lord,
And on the Tent of Meeting, covering it,
Appeared the cloud. No interval, a plague

Fell from on high and threatened all the camp.
But Moses bade his brother go in haste
And, with his censer smoking, intercede
With God. "The plague already is begun,"
He cried; "make haste!" Aaron, thus hastened, ran
And in the midst of the assembly stood
Between the living and the dead, that so
The plague was stayed; but thousands fell before.

And now to make an end of murmurings
Among the people against his elect,
Jehovah honored Aaron with a sign,
Miraculous and beautiful, for all
To see, that all thenceforth might surely know
Aaron to be peculiarly his choice.
Twelve rods, for every several tribe a rod,
Were laid up in the Tent of Meeting, one
With Aaron's name inscribed thereon as head
Of Levi's house; and on the morrow, lo,
Of all the rods, the rod with Aaron's name
Was budded, and was blossomed, and bore fruit,
Ripe almonds. "Put this back," Jehovah said
To Moses, "in its place within the Tent
Of Meeting; it shall be as token there

Against the children of rebellion kept."

But no signs, whether dread or beautiful,
Availed to make the mutinous murmuring cease
Of people seeming to rebellion born.
And Moses knew that he henceforward faced
A prospect of long wandering to and fro
Amid the mazes of the wilderness,
No promise of arrival at a goal,
In toilsome conduct of a thankless host,
Year after year, till forty years should go,
And all that generation waste away.
Well might that old man's heart in him have failed ;
But everlasting strength to him was fed,
And when the forty years were quite consumed
And sixscore years of life to him, with eye
Not dim it was, and with the force in him
Of nature not abated, that he died.

Nevertheless, within those forty years
Of all-enduring patience and of toil,
Some intervals of leisure he enjoyed,
Or of reprieve at least from instant care,
As when at Kadesh resting many days.

Such grateful intermissions of release
From the exactions of his leadership,
Vicarious-minded still, Moses employed
Otherwise for the service of mankind.
For then he wrote the story of the world,
How it began to be by God's command ;
How Adam was created, and how Eve ;
And what the happy state wherein they stood
Inhabiting that garden of delight,
Until the Serpent came and tempted Eve ;
And how they twain, the woman and the man,
Together both, by disobedience fell ;
How, after that first sin, they were expelled
From the fair garden where they dwelt before,
And sadly sin increased in all the world ;
And how then with the waters of a flood
God washed the world of men and of their works,
And only Noah with his household spared
To be a new beginning of mankind ;
How again sin increased upon the earth ;
And how God then at length chose Abraham
To be the father of a people who
Should be a seed peculiarly his own,
And in whom all the races of mankind,

To countless coming ages, should be blessed —
The story of redemption thus begun,
To Moses, the one story of the world!

The hours that Moses to such records gave,
Pharimoh as his helper shared with him;
Gladly and gratefully his hand he lent
To his reveréd master, so to ease
The toil of fixing on the written roll
Words for the ear translated for the eye.
Moses one day had visited the Tent
Of Meeting, by Jehovah thither called,
When he — returned to his own private tent
Where, summoned, Pharimoh attended him —
Thus, without prelude, to his helper spoke
Intently, "Write: 'In the beginning God
Created all, the heavens and the earth.'"
Then followed, in sublime simplicity,
The story of those six great days of God
Ascending to their climax in the sixth
When was made man, to be the lord of all.

Pharimoh, hearing, heeded as he wrote:
Both what he heard he heeded, and besides

The aspect of the man who spoke these things.
His aspect was the aspect of a seer ;
He spoke as if he, with an inner eye,
Saw pictured on imagination's walls
The things that he described ; as if they had
In visions, not in words, been shown to him.
He seemed to Pharimoh to have again
His visions, while he put them into words :
Again, the fabric of the heavens and earth,
By the creative will and word of God
To see projected into empty space ;
To see again the darkness visible
Resting upon the surface of the deep ;
Again, the brooding of the Spirit of God,
Invisible made visible, to see —
Ages foreshortened to a moment's span —
Quicken the inert waters into birth ;
Again, the glorious vision of light sprung
Suddenly on a darkling universe
Broke to the inner senses of the seer,
As he that lightning-flash of language struck,
“ ‘ Let there be light ! ’ God said, and there was light.”

The tale of the Temptation, and the Fall

By disobedience, melancholy tale!
Close followed thereupon, and Pharimoh,
Remembering how, with Mahlah, while yet young,
He sighed once for an opportunity
Of talk with Moses touching those deep things
And dark whereof they twain had talked in vain,
The mystery of evil in the world,
And sin, what its beginning was, and why
God suffered it — remembering this, he now —
His doubt, his question, still unsatisfied —
Exclaimed to Moses: “ But it is all dark
Still, for I cannot understand ” — “ Oh, nay,”
Said Moses, interrupting him, “ no man
Can understand the mystery of sin,
Why it is here; but here it is, we know,
And thus it was that sin began to be
Here, whencesoever it was hither brought,
And wheresoever in the universe
It took its start to spread its blight abroad.
Adam and Eve were tempted from without;
Tempted to what? To disobedience
Of God. But to be tempted was not sin;
They did not sin until they disobeyed.
To tempt to disobedience, that is sin!

Sin therefore was already in the world —
Intruder here, invader, foreign foe —
Before Eve tasted the forbidden fruit.
That Serpent more than serpent merely was,
Since he committed sin, tempting to sin.
An evil being it was in serpent form,
Some formidable foe of God and man,
That did the tempter's work. But had not man
Yielded, that evil being could no harm
Have wrought; nay, but he would instead have given
To man a noble opportunity
To prove steadfast his loyalty and love
By spurning the temptation to rebel.

“ But, mark thou, Pharimoh, we do not solve
The problem of the mystery of sin
By such regress in thought to sin brought here
From elsewhere, unknown where, outside this world.
The problem of the mystery persists;
And here, O Pharimoh, thy chance supreme
Salute and welcome, to bow lowly down
Adoring, where thou canst not understand.
Does it demand an agony of faith?
Humbly let us that agony of faith,

Jehovah's aid invoking, undertake !”

Pharimoh said no more, and no more said
Moses ; it was as if in silence they
Together both, the old man and the young,
That agony of faith with prayer essayed.
Never before was flushed on Pharimoh
Such an access of joyful reverence,
Of joyful, grateful love, as now he felt
Flooding his heart to hear from Moses' lips
The one word “us,” so uttered in a sense,
By that august and venerable man,
Which joined him with himself in fellowship —
Him, so far younger, but a little child
In wisdom and experience — with himself,
In equal fellowship as were they both
Together little children before God,
And needed both together and alike
For the same victory of faith to strive.

Year after year revolved its selfsame round
Of seasons, months, weeks, days, till forty years
Were now well-nigh accomplished, and that host
Who out of Egypt singing triumph came

And journeyed joyous toward the Promised Land,
Were well-nigh wasted utterly away,
Fallen and perished in the wilderness.
But a new progeny had been meantime
Nourished more numerous up to man's estate,
And the elected hour drew on when these
Should take possession of their heritage.

They had been troublous years, those forty years —
Rebellions, punishments, and wars and plagues,
And fiery serpents sent throughout the host —
Labor and sorrow they had been, those years,
To Moses; but by reason of strength he stood
Untouched by the decrepitude of age,
To see those millions of the chosen seed
Perish around him and to be the sole
Survivor of his generation. He
His brother and his sister had seen pass;
His sister first, and then his brother went,
Gathered unto their people from his side.

Miriam was never after quite the same
As before she with Aaron sinned that sin,
Suffered that punishment, and was forgiven.

She was, if less majestic, more meek,
Softer, more easily entreated, more
The gentle mother, less the prophetess.
But, broken from her strength after that day,
Painlessly she, by unperceived degrees,
With placid acquiescence, slow declined
Toward the inevitable end foreseen,
Until at Kadesh-Barnea she died,
And, having been buried with all honor there,
Was mourned by reverent Israel thirty days.

Aaron survived his sister, yet not long ;
From Kadesh Israel journeyed to mount Hor,
And at mount Hor dismissal came to him.
For there to Moses and to Aaron thus
Jehovah : " Aaron shall be gathered hence
Unto his people ; it shall not be his
To enter into the long-promised land.
For ye " — and herein the two brothers both
Were blamed alike — " rebelled against my word
At Meribah, and did not sanctify
Me in my people's eyes." Now thus it was :
Israel at Kadesh suffered thirst once more,
And, as their wont was, murmured against God

Whereupon Moses, bidden by the Lord,
Gathered the host together by the rock
And with the rod twice smote it that it gushed
Abundant water. But the Lord had said
To Moses and to Aaron both, "Speak ye
Unto the rock" (not, 'Smite it with the rod') —
This in the presence of the people all —
"That it give forth its water." They instead
Spoke to the murmuring people angrily,
And nigh as if in their own power it lay
To make the rock flow water at a stroke:
"Hear now, ye rebels. Will ye that we bring
Water for your supply from out this rock?"
Presumptuous sin, that cost those brothers dear!
When the time came elected by the Lord,
Moses was bidden go and take with him
Aaron and Eleazar, Aaron's son,
Up to the summit of mount Hor. Those three
Alone there on that lonely mountain top,
Moses stripped Aaron of the robe he wore
And put it upon Eleazar — so
Jehovah had commanded him to do;
And Aaron, welcoming his release from life,
And glad to have his son endued from him,

Was gathered to his people on mount Hor.
But Israel, when they knew that he was dead,
Their thirty days of mourning wept for him,
Lamenting, all the house of Israel.

Jehovah, no long time thereafter, said
To Moses, in his turn, last of the three :
“ Behold the mountain here of Abarim,
Go up thou into it, and see from far
The land I have reserved for Israel ;
Then, like thy brother Aaron, thou shalt be
Gathered unto thy people, having seen,
But having entered not, the promised land.”

Moses was not reluctant to lay down
The burden of the long life he had lived
So meekly and so bravely — to such fruit!
Not for himself, ever for others all! —
But, his release in prospect now, his heart,
That large prophetic heart, yearned tenderly,
Toward the beloved people he had led —
Beloved, little worthy to be loved,
But dear, for served at such self-sacrifice —
And with ineffable desire he now

Desired to serve them still after his death.
So to his trusted Pharimoh he said :
“ I shall go presently into the mount
Chosen for me by Jehovah, there to die.
But God, I think, will grant me yet a space,
A little space, to do what I would do,
Which is what also God would have me do.
So sit thee down and write, while to and fro
I walk and muse, and tell thee what to write.
I fain would leave my heart in legacy
For treasure to this people, to be kept
By them in all their generations. I
In farewell counsels will pour out my heart ;
A drop of heart's blood every word will be —
So do I love them, and so long for them,
Pity them so, and so desire their good ! ”

First he rehearsed the story of the way
In which Jehovah had his people led,
From the beginning of their pilgrimage
Until that present. He reminded them
How God enlarged their number to so great,
Making them many as the stars of heaven.
He told them how his own heart from the first

Was large for them, how it had burst in prayer,
“The Lord God of your fathers make you yet
A thousand times so many as ye are,
And bless you, as his word of promise is!”
“I wished,” he said, “and I besought the Lord,
That I might over Jordan go, and see
The good land nigh which was to be so soon
Your heritage; but God was wroth with me,
For your sakes, and he granted not my prayer.
Into the top of Pisgah I should climb,
Thence only, from so far off, see the land,
The good land, ye may enter and possess.

“Oh, keep ye the commandments of the Lord;
Be not enticed away from him to serve
Gods other than Jehovah, your own God.
This is your life; take heed, nor disobey.
Consider, and ask ye of all past days,
The days that were before you, since the day
When God created man upon the earth,
And let your eyes range free from the one end
Of heaven unto the other, has there been
Any such thing as this great thing, before
Or since, anywhere else in the wide world?”

Did ever people hear the voice of God
Speaking, as ye have heard, out of the heart
Of fire, and live? Or hath the Lord assayed
To take to him a nation from amidst
Another nation, by temptations, signs
And wonders, and by war, and with a hand
Of power, and with an arm stretched-out of might,
And by great terrors, as Jehovah did
For you in Egypt, witnessed by your eyes?
Know therefore ye this day, and lay it well
To heart, Jehovah he alone is God,
In heaven above and in the earth beneath,
There is none else; obey him, for your life!"

The vehement passion with which Moses dwelt
Dilating and insisting on his theme,
Shook his great age albeit so firm and strong;
He therefore seasons of respite interposed,
Returning to his task from day to day.
But, with each day's return, the self-same thoughts,
Recurring to his mind insistentlly,
The chief ones ever, again and yet again
Importunately claimed to be expressed
As if they had not been expressed before.

This, until Pharimoh at length, one day
When that day's portion of the work was done,
Ventured upon a question touching it:
" Will my lord Moses pardon me to ask,
Why is it thou thinkest well to say again
And yet again so often the same things? "
" That, haply," Moses said, in soft reply,
Which a half-humor with its pathos mixed,
" That, haply, is an incident of age ;
For, though so hale, I know that I am old ;
More, it must be, because I speak these things,
Not with mine own hand write them all at once
In a continuous strain ; so I forget
From one day to another exactly what
Has been already said, and, knowing well
What needs most to be said, say it again.
Let it be so, my Pharimoh ; for so
Expresses best the fulness of my heart.
Obedience to Jehovah, that is life,
I cannot say it over and over enough,
I cannot keep it in the ears and eyes
Of this forgetful people, as I would.
But now that thou hast made me think of it,
Write me this one thing more this very day :

' O Israel, hear: Jehovah is our God,
Jehovah only: lo, with all thy heart,
With all thy soul, with all thy might, love thou
Jehovah, thy one God, and do his words.
His words be ever in thy heart to do,
And teach thou with all diligence his words
Unto thy children; always talk of them,
Wherever thou mayst be, whatever thou
Mayst do; talk of them sitting in thy house,
Talk of them walking by the way; of them
Talk lying down, talk of them rising up;
Bind thou them for a sign upon thy hand;
Let them as frontlets be between thine eyes;
Write them upon the door-posts of thy house;
Write them to meet thine eyes upon thy gates.' "

The next day Moses said to Pharimoh:
" I cannot wholly cheer my heart with hope
Concerning Israel, that they will indeed
Be wise to keep the statutes of their God.
How well do I remember one great word,
Great for so gracious, from Jehovah God
Spoken to me. It was on Sinai mount,
And Israel had just sworn their joint amen

In promise to obey ; God with a voice
Then spoke to me and said — it seemed almost
As if God said it with a sigh, if God
Could sigh! — ‘ Oh, that there were in them a heart
Such that they would indeed fear me and keep
All my commandments always, that it might
Be well with them and with their children ever !
It seemed desire but expectation not ;
And God was sad — such sadness as may be
In the eternal blessedness of God —
And I am sad this day, I cannot hope,
I cannot, cannot wholly hope the good
That I unspeakably desire for them,
My people, my beloved, longed for — feared
For yet, alas, unutterably more !

“ I have two visions of their lot to be,
Blesséd and glorious one, beyond all words,
And one sadder than any words could tell.
Israel must choose between these different lots.
How shall I help my people wisely choose ?
What arguments employ ? what eloquence ?
Persuasion or dissuasion, which ? Or both ?
Dissuade to disobey, with threat of curse

Denounced to follow disobedience,
Or to obey persuade, with lure held out
Of boundless blessing on obedience?
Oh, Pharimoh, thy younger hopefulnesse
Lend me a little while, that I may now —
Misgiving none that all will be in vain —
Depict with joy, in colors glowing bright,
The good that our Jehovah God will do
To Israel, if but Israel will obey.

“ Write now, but I must even go forth myself,
And, with my face in love and longing bent
Upon the congregation, speak these words
With mine own voice to them before I die.
Aaron is gone, who was as mouth to me;
Write then these words, as I shall speak them soon :
‘ O Israel, if thou wilt indeed obey,
The Lord thy God will set thee up on high
Above the nations all of all the earth.
Blesséd in city, blesséd too in field,
Shalt thou be, blesséd when thou comest in,
And blesséd when thou goest out. The Lord
Shall cause thine enemies that rise against
Thee to be smitten in thy presence; they

Against thee shall one way come out, and flee
Seven ways in terror from before thy face.
And all the peoples of the earth shall see
That thou art by the name of thy Lord God
Called, and shall stand in fear of thee and dread.
Jehovah his good treasury the heaven
Shall open unto thee to give the rain
In its due season to thy land, and bless
Thy work, all that thy hand essays to do.
Thou shalt to many nations lend, and thou
Shalt of none borrow. For Jehovah shall
Make thee the head, and thou shalt be above,
Only and alway, and not be beneath.'

“ That is the vision, Pharimoh, for good
Possible if but Israel will obey.
Why is it that I cannot stay my heart
In such hope of it for them, as to be
Blind to that other vision which even now
Looms on me menacing and terrible?
If thou couldst write in lines of blood and fire!—
For blood and fire this vision looms to me:
'Oh, Israel, Israel! If thou disobey!
Curséd, instead of blesséd, shalt thou be.

Cursing, discomfiture, rebuke, on thee
Will from Jehovah light in all thy ways.
Thee with consumption shall Jehovah smite,
With inflammation, fever, fiery heat,
And with the sword, with mildew, blasting, blight ;
These shall pursue thee, cling to thee, until
Thou perish utterly from out the land.
Above thy head thy heaven shall be brass,
And iron the earth shall be beneath thy feet.
The rain of thy land shall Jehovah make
Powder and dust, upon thee coming down
In shower from heaven until thou be destroyed.

“ Jehovah will cause thee to fall before
Thine enemies ; thou shalt go out one way
Against them, and before them thou shalt flee
Seven ways ; and thou shalt be tossed to and fro
Among the kingdoms all of the whole earth.
With madness, blindness, with astonishment
Of heart, Jehovah shall smite thee, and thou
Shalt grope at noonday as the blind man gropes
In darkness. Thou shalt be oppressed alway
And only, with none to deliver thee.
Thy sons and daughters shall from thee be given

Unto thine enemies and thine eyes shall look,
And fail with longing for them all the day —
And nothing in the power of thy hand !

“ ‘ Jehovah will bring thee unto a strange
Nation, their gods of wood and stone to serve ;
And thou shalt an astonishment become,
A proverb, and a byword, everywhere
Among the peoples where thou captive art.

“ ‘ Because thou servedst not with joyfulness
Jehovah in the midst of all things good,
Therefore thine enemies shalt thou serve, in thirst,
In hunger, and in nakedness, and want
Of all things, yoke of iron upon thy neck.
Jehovah will against thee bring from far,
Swift, cruel, like an eagle flying swift,
A nation summoned by him from earth's end,
Whose way of speech thou wilt not understand,
A nation of fierce countenance, in their heart
No pity for the young or for the old.
They shall besiege thee everywhere, in all
Thy gates, until thy walls come down, thy high
Walls fortified, wherein thou hadst thy trust.

They shall besiege thee thus through all thy land —
The land thy God Jehovah gave to thee ;
The fruit of thine own body thou shalt eat,
The flesh, yea, of thy sons and daughters, whom
Thy God gave thee — in the besetment strait,
The siege and the distress intolerable
Wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee round.
The tender man among you, delicate
Exceedingly, evil shall be his eye
Toward his own brother, nay, but toward the wife
Beloved once, of his bosom, and toward all
The remnant of his children left to him,
So that he will not unto one of them
Give of his children's flesh to share with him,
In the distress and straitness of the siege.
Yea, and the woman, tender, delicate,
Too delicately tender to set sole
Of foot upon the ground, evil her eye
Shall toward the husband of her bosom be,
And toward her son, and toward her daughter, nay,
But toward the just-born babe that she shall bear ;
For she, for want of all things, secretly
Shall eat them, in the dire extremity
To which thou shalt be brought in all thy gates.'

“ Oh, Pharimoh,” said Moses, pausing here,
And looking on his helper with fixed gaze,
Which yet seemed not to see, “ Oh, Pharimoh,
If I could shut my eyes, my inner eyes,
Against the vision of these things to be!
But, alas, not to see them, would not cause
Them not to be — if Israel disobey!
And worse things yet now crowd upon my sight.
For the distresses of the siege, so dire,
Cannot continue long, they have an end
At last in death, not to be long postponed.
But the distresses of captivity!
I hear, I hear, the weeping and the sighs!
No words are equal, but write thou these words:
‘ Oh, Israel, Israel! Fear this glorious name,
This fearful name, Jehovah God alone!
If not, Jehovah then will scatter thee
Among all peoples, over all the earth.
Among those peoples thou shalt find no ease,
And for the sole of thy foot nowhere rest.
But there thy God Jehovah shall give thee
A trembling heart, failing of eyes, a soul
Pining within thee; and in doubt shall hang
Thy life before thee and thou night and day

Shalt fear, with no assurance of thy life.
Thou in the morning with a sigh shalt say,
Would it were even! And when the even is come,
Would it were morning! shalt thou say, so sore
Upon thee shall the fear of thy heart be,
So terrible the seeing of thine eyes!’”

The vivid vision with which Moses saw
These terrors as if looming imminent,
And the reaction of the energy
And pathos of his sombre eloquence
Describing them, dissolved his strength, and he
For that day ceased, his task not yet fulfilled.
Pharimoh saw his master's state, and held
His peace; but in his secret heart he asked,
‘May not the disobedient, if they will,
Repent and be forgiven? Is there no hope?’
He was glad, therefore, when the morrow came,
To see what seemed a light on Moses' face,
Dawn from the darkness of the day before.
“Dost thou remember,” so to Pharimoh
Moses began, “dost thou remember this,
Which, from mount Sinai even, Jehovah said,
‘For I am gracious,’ speaking of himself?”

And blesséd be Jehovah for his grace !
Write now from me these words for Israel :
' O Israel, when the blessing and the curse
Set forth before thee shall have come to pass,
And thou, among the nations whither God
Hath driven thee out, shalt call them back to mind,
And shalt with all thy heart and all thy soul
Return unto Jehovah and obey
His voice, Jehovah then will unto thee
Return in thy captivity, will have
Compassion on thee, and will gather thee
From all the nations into thine own land
Again — and it shall be thine own again —
And he will do thee good and multiply
Thy number more than all the past ;
For over thee again Jehovah will
Rejoice for good, as he in former time
Rejoiced over thy fathers — if thou wilt
Obey Jehovah and his law observe !

“ Be heaven and earth my witness against you
That I have set before thee life and death
This day ; I pray thee, I adjure thee, choose
Life ; to obey Jehovah, that is life

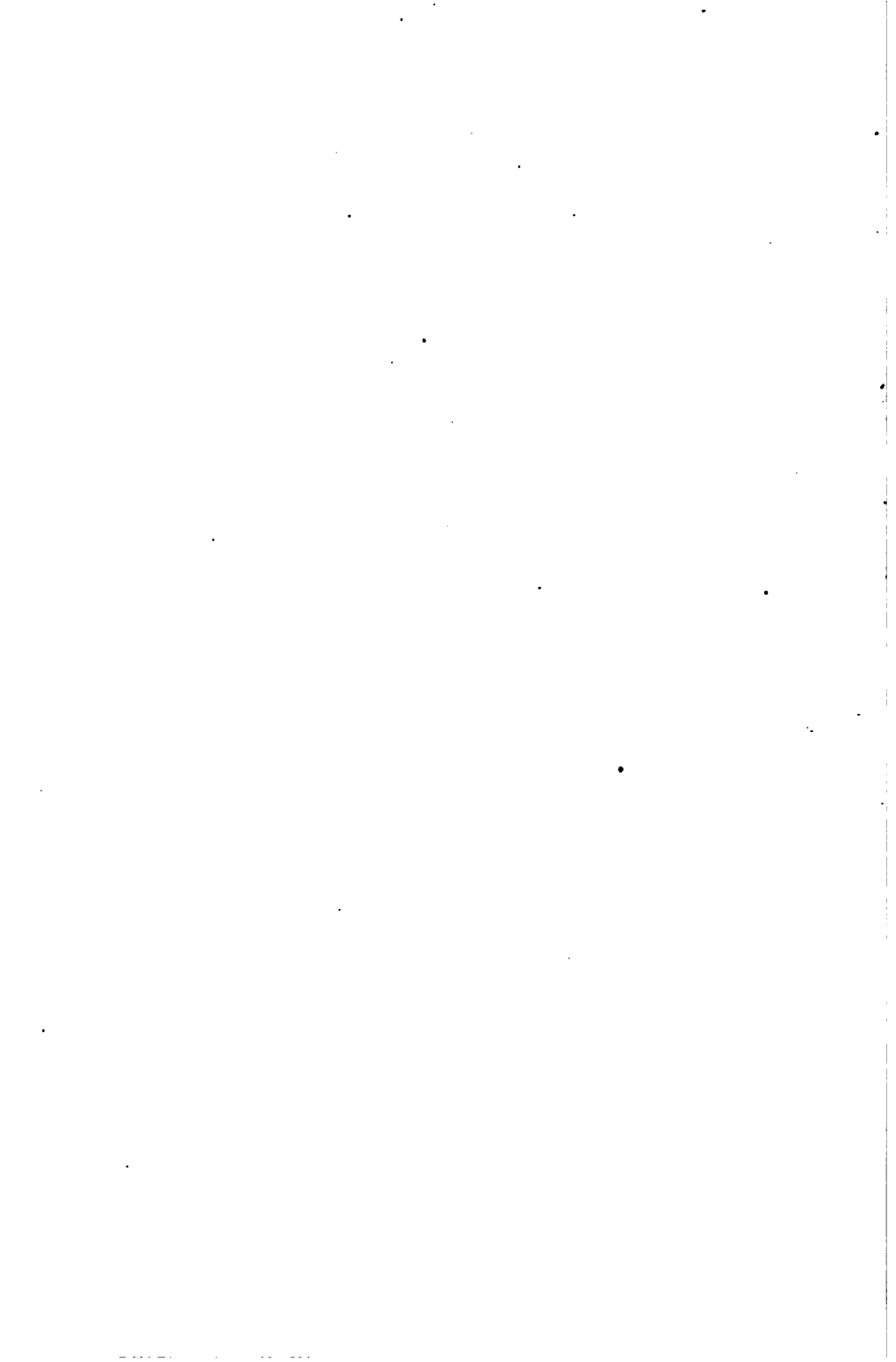
For thee ; to love him, to cleave fast to him,
To do his will alway, that is thy life,
O Israel, and that thy length of days ! ”

A light of hope illumined at the last
The spirit of the seer ; and when he went
Before the people all and spoke these words,
The blessing and the curse, the light prevailed,
Softly and tenderly, as when the sun
At setting looks from underneath a cloud
Banking the west, and with a gentle ray
Pathetically cheerful takes farewell.

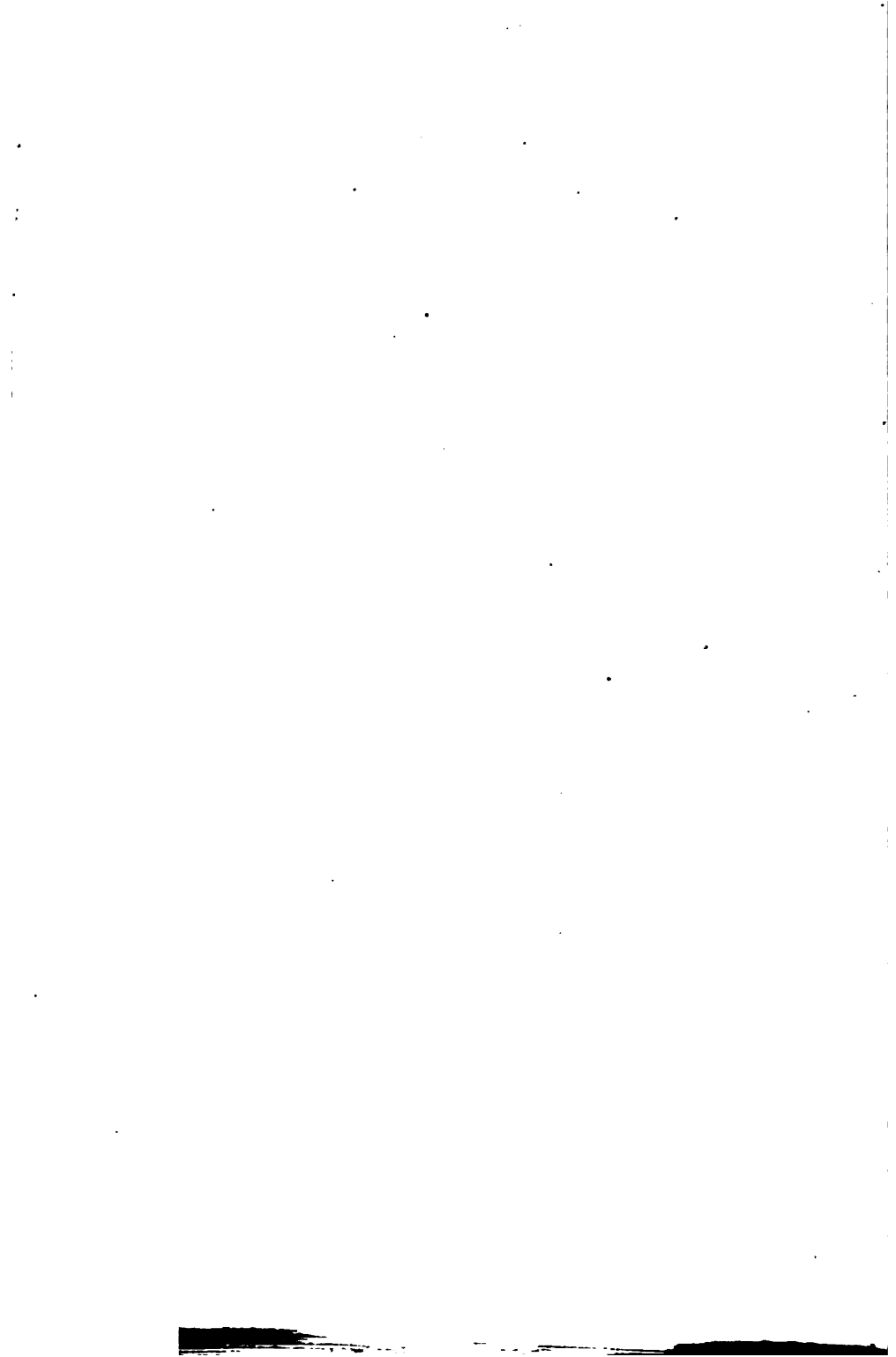
When the day came at length that he should be
Seen coming in and going out no more,
To Pharimoh, the morning of that day,
Moses, full-ready, with all meekness said :
“ Thou hast been trusted, willing hand to me,
For writing all that I would wish to leave
Behind me for the memory of men.
Add also, after I am gone from thee
This day and thou shalt see my face no more,
What may complete the nigh-completed tale
Of Moses and the end he met content.

Once more, and now for the last time, I go
Alone into the lonely mountain, there
To be alone with God, and there to die.
Farewell, my Pharimoh; I have for thee
No other word in parting than the word
I have myself lived by, not perfectly,
And now to die by go, Obey! Obey!"

Thus spoken, he went up alone to God.
He had bequeathed to Joshua the task
Of leading Israel into the good land,
And cheered him to accomplish it with hope.
So, on that mountain top of Abarim,
God gathered him to his people and himself;
And what was mortal of his servant, God
Buried with his own hand — where, no man knows;
But it was in the valley, in the land
Of Moab, near the mountain where he died.









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